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ADrift ON THE SEA



BY
E·M·NORRIS·





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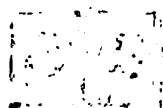
THE CHILDREN'S BOOK

BY

EMILIA MARLYN VOYLES

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ADRIFT ON THE SEA

OR

THE CHILDREN'S ESCAPE

BY

EMILIA MARRYAT NORRIS

AUTHOR OF 'THE EARLY START IN LIFE,' 'STOLEN CHERRIES,'
'A WEEK BY THEMSELVES,' ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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CHAPTER I.

THE INVITATION TO THE SEA-SIDE.

HERE'S a lark!' cried Arthur, running into the playroom, with a very red face.

'Where? how did you catch him?

Take care he does not fly away!' screamed George, jumping from his seat and throwing down a book he was reading. Then a moment after, he looked disappointed and said, 'Where is the lark, Arty? I don't see it.'

'But I see a goose plain enough,' said Arthur, who thought himself a very witty boy. 'I see a goose standing in front of me, and his name is George Layton. There are other larks than those that have wings, and better larks a great deal.'

'I don't understand you,' said George.

‘He means something funny, I think,’ said Bessie.

‘I’ll tell you what I mean, little woman,’ said Arthur, in the way he had heard his papa speak sometimes to the little girl, ‘I mean a lark of great fun, and—and, in fact, a great lark.’

‘Oh!’ said George, although not quite satisfied with the explanation; ‘but why is it called a lark?’

‘Why, I am sure, I don’t know, excepting that everybody calls it so,’ said Arthur, ‘besides, it is a lark; that is why it is called so.’

Which was a very fine reason, was it not?

‘But what is your great fun?’ asked Bessie.

‘Open wide your ears, and hear,’ said Arthur. ‘Would it not be a lark to go to the sea-side?’

‘Are we?’ said Georgie.

‘Well, we have been asked. I’ll tell you. You know Aunt Harriette is staying at the sea-side.’

‘Where?’ asked Bessie.

‘I forget the name of the place,’ said Arthur; ‘*some* little quiet sort of a place; where, they tell me, a fellow can do just as he likes; the sort of place that suits me.’

‘Are you the fellow?’ asked Bessie.

‘Don’t be impertinent, Bess,’ said Arthur, who was now seated upon the table, dangling his legs

and looking as if he thought himself the biggest man in the world.

Between you and me, he was only twelve years old; but then he had been at a public school for the last two years; and, by nature, Arthur Layton was very conceited. Perhaps you have found that out already, so that I need not have told you.

'But when are we to go, Arty?' presently asked George.

'I don't know; I suppose papa will tell us; but the fact is, I only heard about it all by accident.'

'I believe you were not meant to say anything about it,' said Bessie. 'Perhaps, after all, we are not going. I shall be so disappointed now if we do not.'

But Bessie was not disappointed; for a little while after she had been told by Arthur, her mamma spoke to all three of the children about their aunt's invitation. George and the little girl were ready to jump for joy at hearing of it; and they made a great deal of noise with laughing and chattering; but Arthur, although he was quite as much pleased as his little sister and brother, thought it would not look manly to show it; so he only said,—'Very well, mamma; I daresay I

shall be able to spend a week or so very well ; but I hope the place is not very dull.'

His mamma only laughed and gave him no answer ; but Mr. Layton said—' Oh, my dear boy, if you think you will be unable to pass your time there, I can easily write to your aunt and say that Bessie and George only will come. I will write at once by to-day's post.' And he got up as if to go to the writing-table.

' Oh no, papa ; pray don't,' said Arthur, really afraid that his papa might do as he said. ' Indeed, I would rather go.'

' So I supposed,' said Mr. Layton.

' By the bye, my dears,' said his mamma, ' you must all of you be careful of your best clothes while at Tormouth. It is a very quiet little place ; and anything will do to wear about on the beach.'

Arthur had some trouble in hiding his excitement and pleasure at the thought of the visit ; but he managed pretty well generally, silly fellow, to pretend that he did not care much. Of course, this looked grand to Bessie and George ; but his papa and mamma saw through Master Arthur and laughed together.

Before they started, a dreadful thing for Arthur took place. His papa said, ' My dear boy, I hope while you are with your aunt you will be

very steady, and mind everything she says to you.'

This to a boy of twelve !

Arthur answered, ' I am not a child, sir.'

' You are at a more dangerous age than that of a child, my son,' answered Mr. Layton ; ' for you think too much of yourself, Arthur. It is not the first time I have told you of this, as you know well. I wish I could see you trying to cure your self-conceit. The worst of it is, my dear boy, that if you do not cure yourself, you will be cured some way or another which you may not like.'

Arthur had reason later in life to think of these words of his father's ; but now he gave no answer, and turned sulky. There was nothing put him out so much as being told of his faults, and especially of this his greatest.

However, sulky boys and girls punish themselves more than any one else is punished by them, excepting that it is always disagreeable to look at their ugly faces with their lips sticking out ; and no one is so ugly as a sulky child. Mr. Layton took no notice, but I daresay he thought that Arthur did not make a very nice return for being allowed to go and visit his aunt ; and I daresay that both you and I think much the same.

When the children arrived with their papa at

the railway station, on the day they were to go to Tormouth, as Bessie and George were staring about, and Arthur was ordering a porter with regard to his bag with a great deal of pomp, who should they come against face to face but their cousin Frank !

Frank opened his eyes wide at sight of them, and said, ' Why, little ones, where are you going ? '

Bessie and George answered both at once, and cousin Frank said, ' That's capital ! Why, I am going down too ; so we will all go together, and won't we have fun, Bess, you and I ? '

' Me too,' said Georgie.

' Of course, all of us,' said cousin Frank.

Arthur did not feel nor look pleased. He did not like the idea of his cousin going with them ; for Frank was six feet high and had a beard, and it made Arthur feel younger than he did away from him.

' Oh ! I am so glad you are going, my dear Frank,' said Mr. Layton. ' You will not mind seeing a little to the children on the way down, will you ? '

As if Arthur could not have seen to them !

If he could only have guessed that his papa spoke of all three of them !

' All right,' said Frank, who, by way of ' seeing'

to them, directly carried off Bessie to the refreshment-room.

They started in very high spirits, all but Arthur, who sat silent in his corner of the railway-carriage, and said 'No!' when he was offered chocolate from a box which his cousin had given to Bessie.

'I thought you liked chocolate, Arty,' said the little girl. 'I could have taken barley-sugar instead, for cousin Frank offered me either, but I thought you liked chocolate.'

So he did uncommonly, but, dear me, what a lot of pleasure he deprived himself of by his nonsense!

So Bessie offered the chocolate to cousin Frank, who ate all Arthur's share.

'Seen to-day's paper?' said Frank, looking very much as if he was laughing, and offering the *Times* to Arthur.

'No! not yet,' said Arthur, taking it.

An old gentleman at the other end of the carriage looked quickly at him and smiled, and Arthur had an uncomfortable idea that they were both laughing at him; but he was not sure; so he could not say anything, but sat behind the *Times* pretending to read, but in reality listening to a story that cousin Frank was telling to his brother and sister. He had taken little Bessie upon his knee,

and Georgie was leaning both arms upon Frank's lap, as he listened. The old gentleman who was at the other end of the carriage laid down his paper, and, as cousin Frank was speaking to the children in a low voice, he bent forward to listen, for it was not such a story as you would hear every day in the week.

Would you like to hear it ? Here it is.





CHAPTER II.

COUSIN FRANK'S STORY.

THERE was once upon a time, said cousin Frank, a gentleman whose name was Mr. Smith. Perhaps you may have seen him; or, if not, you may very likely meet him some day. You will know him by his name being Mr. Smith for one thing; and, to make sure, you may ask him if this story is not true.

Mr. Smith had a very large nose. It was so large that he sometimes hardly knew what to do with it. If he drank a cup of tea or a glass of beer, his nose drank at the same time and came out dripping. The dogs in the street made snaps at his nose as he walked; for I think they took it for a sausage; and I am very sorry to say that the rude vulgar little boys shouted out after him, 'There goes Nosey!'

Mr. Smith went to the doctor.

‘Sir,’ said he, ‘can you do anything to reduce my nose?’

The doctor put on his spectacles.

Now there was no need of spectacles to see Mr. Smith’s nose, for any one could have seen it half-a-mile off; but between you and me, the doctor thought he looked wiser in spectacles than without.

‘The doctor took Mr. Smith by the nose and led him to the window, and then looked at him with his head on one side, and lastly said, ‘Hum!’

‘What do you mean by “hum,” sir?’ asked Mr. Smith. ‘Let go my nose: can you do anything to make it smaller?’

The doctor answered, ‘Nothing.’

‘Then why did not you say so before?’ said Mr. Smith, getting very angry, and rushing out of the doctor’s house without looking where he was going. He walked so fast, and held his head so down as he walked, that presently he tripped over his nose and fell upon the pavement. There he lay with the blood streaming from his nostrils, and his legs kicking up and down with the pain.

After a time he got up again, and then his nose began to swell. It swelled at first as big as two

of his nose ; then it swelled so as nearly to cover up his eyes ; then it swelled over his mouth and down his chest, until everybody who met him, even the rude boys, were too frightened even to call him Nosey.

‘Really, cousin Frank ? really ?’ said little Bessie, whose eyes had been getting larger and larger as she listened. Her cousin appeared not to hear her, but went on :—

Back went Mr. Smith to the doctor’s house, and by the time he arrived there he looked like nothing but a nose.

‘Doctor,’ said he, ‘remove this lump from my face ; or I will never speak to you again.’

‘It is certainly rather large,’ said the doctor, ringing the bell.

‘Betty,’ said he, when the servant came, ‘bring me the bread-knife.’

‘Lauks !’ said Betty, catching sight of Mr. Smith’s nose ; and without a word more she fainted into the coal-scuttle.

The doctor rang the bell again, and a page-boy came.

‘Carry out that coal-scuttle, and empty out that woman from it,’ he said, ‘and bring me the bread-knife.’

The page-boy stood with his mouth open and stared.

‘Do you hear?’ shouted his master.

‘All right! Cockalorum! Higgledy-piggledy! Squashybungo,’ said the page.

‘The boy has become an idiot!’ said the doctor, ringing the bell till it could be heard half way over the town.

This time there came a stableman.

‘Joe,’ said the doctor, ‘kick that boy downstairs; take away that woman, and bring the bread-knife.’

Joe tittered for a moment as he caught sight of Mr. Smith’s nose; but he wished to obey, so he seized the coal-scuttle and emptied Betty upon the fire; and then began to kick his master downstairs; for he really was so confused, poor fellow, that he hardly knew what he was doing.

So, after all, the doctor had to go and fetch the bread-knife for himself; and having already wasted a great deal of time, he was determined to waste no more, so he only said, ‘Here goes!’ and sliced off Mr. Smith’s nose with one chop. He then clapped a large piece of plaister upon the place, and Mr. Smith looked at himself in the glass.

‘Really, Cousin Frank?’ asked little Bessie again.

‘My dear child, you must not interrupt me,’ said Frank.

And then the old gentleman at the other end of the carriage laughed from behind his newspaper.

‘I must get another nose,’ said Mr. Smith. ‘This will never do; I look quite a fright.’

So he went first to the glazier’s, and said to him, — ‘Do you think you could make me a nose?’

‘Yes, sir,’ said the glazier; ‘nothing easier, sir; nose out of putty, sir.’

At the same time the glazier dabbed a great piece of putty in the middle of Mr. Smith’s face.

‘Oh!’ called out Mr. Smith; for the place was sore from having had his nose cut off.

‘One moment, sir,’ said the glazier, pinching the nose into shape.

‘Oh! oh!’ said Mr. Smith.

‘Allow me, sir,’ said the glazier again, bringing a putty-knife, and slapping Mr. Smith’s nose first one side and then the other side, until he roared and stamped.

‘That’s it, sir—perfect!’

Mr. Smith looked at his nose in the glass; it certainly was very well shaped, but a rather queer colour: it looked like a dead nose. Mr. Smith left the shop and walked up the street. He felt sick as he walked, for the putty smelt so horrid. He went through the hot sun, and the putty

smelt more and more, and the stronger it smelt, the more Mr. Smith's nose turned up with feeling sick, until it curled up like a snail shell.

'Hollo, Cocknose !' said a vulgar little boy as he passed.

'Cocknose ! am I to be called Cocknose ? that is as bad as Nosey,' said Mr. Smith, putting his hand up to his nose. He looked into the next shop window that he passed, and he saw the reflection of his face. He scampered to the glazier. 'Here, take back your putty nose,' said he, pulling it off his face and dabbing it in the face of the glazier. The man had been so frightened when he saw Mr. Smith come back in such a rage, and with such a nose, that he opened his mouth wide, and the putty went right into it, and down his throat in a moment.

He could not eat any dinner that day, and had a sad stomach-ache, for putty is poison.

Mr. Smith walked up and down the street, so vexed that he was ready to cry.

'I will go to California, or to Botany Bay ; or perhaps I had best go to China, for the people there have very little noses, and perhaps they won't notice so much my having none at all. I wish I had kept my own nose ; it was big certainly, but any nose is better than no nose.'

So Mr. Smith lamented over his nose ; and as he did so, he raised his eyes and found himself opposite a large toy-shop. There was a line of twine stretched across the window, and on the string were hung a row of gutta-percha noses.

‘ Ha ! ’ said Mr. Smith, ‘ the very thing ! which shall I choose ? ’

He was in the habit, when puzzled, of laying his finger against his nose, a plan which he had always found very much helped him in a difficulty. Now he tried to do so ; but there was no nose to put his finger against ; and Mr. Smith struck the air.

‘ I will go in and try them on,’ said he at length ; which was perhaps the best plan.

The shopman seemed very pleased to see Mr. Smith, and kept bowing and smiling behind the counter.

‘ Show me those gutta-percha noses you have in the window,’ shouted Mr. Smith, for he felt angry that the man would keep on smiling so when he himself was without a nose.

‘ Noses, sir ? certainly,’ and the shopman laid about fifty noses on the counter. He scooped them up by the handful out of a drawer, and went on scooping until Mr. Smith called to him to stop.

‘Do you expect me to wear four or five dozen noses?’ asked he angrily.

‘No, sir; certainly not, sir; great pick in this lot, sir. I think I shall be able to suit you in a nose this morning, sir; thank you, sir.’

‘Humph,’ said Mr. Smith.

‘Now this is a neat nose, sir,’ said the shopman, holding up a short thick one in his finger and thumb; ‘just suit your style of face, sir; thank you, sir.’

‘Humph,’ said Mr. Smith.

‘The Roman nose, sir,’ again said the shopman, picking out a very large one from the heap. ‘Quite the fashionable nose of the day is the Roman.’

‘Humph,’ said Mr. Smith.

‘The clever nose, sir; slightly turned up at the point; very much worn, sir; thank you, sir.’

‘Humph,’ growled Mr. Smith.

‘Here’s a sweet thing in noses,’ said the man once more, taking up another kind. ‘Allow me to put up this nose for you, sir. I am quite sure it is a nose which will suit you, sir; thank you, sir.’

‘I’ll *thank you*, sir, to hold your tongue,’ said Smith. ‘I came here to buy a nose; not to n to your magpie chatter.’

‘Certainly, sir; thank you, sir,’ said the shopman.

Mr. Smith put his nose in his pocket and left the shop. How was he to stick it on? Would glue do? but glue would leave such an ugly stain all round the edge. He went back to the toy-shop.

‘Here; I say! How am I to stick on this nose?’ he asked.

‘Very simple, sir. Melt the edges at the fire. Allow me, sir; thank you, sir,’ said the shopman.

He was already by the fire in the same room, melting the edges of the nose; next moment he had seized Mr. Smith by the nape of the neck with one hand and with the other clapped the nose upon his face. Mr. Smith kicked and struggled and roared with pain; the gutta-percha was boiling hot; but the man would not let him go; and when he did the nose was stuck so fast that nothing would get it off again.

At any rate, Mr. Smith had got a good-looking nose at last. He caught sight of it in the glass, and he smiled, for he was quite pleased with himself; and he walked along the street with his chin in the air, thinking what a handsome nose he had.

It was a very hot broiling day.

All this had taken some time, and Mr. Smith was beginning to feel hungry.

Here George, who had listened gravely to all Cousin Frank's nonsense, burst out laughing, when there was nothing to laugh at.

'Don't, George,' said Arthur, forgetting his dignity. 'Go on, please, Cousin Frank.'

'Yes; go on, if you please, sir,' said the old gentleman, who had been listening all the time.

Cousin Frank laughed, and then went on with his story.

Mr. Smith passed a pastry-cook's shop and stopped.

'I have a great mind,' said he; 'yes, really I feel very much inclined to—positively, for once in my life, I'll go in and have "a feast."'

He had never been able to enjoy 'a feast' before, because the pastry-cook's girl had always stared so at his nose; but now he had a lovely nose, and did not care who stared.

He stood looking in at the window, thinking what he could eat. There were sausage-rolls and cocked hats, and raspberry tarts and cream tarts; and as he looked, Mr. Smith put his face closer and closer to the window, until his nose touched the pane. The girl in the shop looked at him and laughed, for she had hardly ever seen any one flatten his nose so much as Mr. Smith, although the little boys were in the habit of

flattening their noses there very often during the day ; but Mr. Smith's nose had not any feeling in it, you see, so he pressed it against the window-pane until it was like a penny-piece.

When he saw the pastry-cook's girl laugh, he tried to start away ; but his nose stuck fast to the glass, for the sun had made it so hot that it had melted the gutta-percha nose.

Back went Mr. Smith, with the tip of his nose still sticking to the window, and the nose itself pulling out longer and longer, until it grew into a long string as thick as a whipcord.

Farther and farther back, till it was as thin as a very small twine ; and just at that moment came a mad bull tearing down the street.

Mr. Smith saw him coming, and pulled away farther from his nose. He saw the people rushing after the bull, and heard them shouting,—‘ Out of the way ! get out of the way !’

Mr. Smith cut capers in the air ; he did not know whether to run back to the pastry-cook's shop and gather up the rest of his nose and wind it in a ball, or whether to go on backing more and more away from it.

In another moment the bull gave him no choice. Down the street he came, tearing and bellowing, right against the string, which stretched across the

street; and as he ran with all his strength against it, the gutta-percha broke!

Poor Mr. Smith! Bang came the long stretched-out nose against the middle of his face, and down he went like a shot.

Whether the blow killed him or no, I have never heard. At any rate, he was not seen in that town again; but, as I told you before, if you should meet a gentleman named Mr. Smith at any time, you can ask him if he ever had a gutta-percha nose, and whether this story happened to him; and meanwhile, remember from what happened to Mr. Smith, that it is always better to be content with our noses as nature made them.

Here Cousin Frank stopped, and so did the train, and a guard came to the carriage door and said, 'Tickets, please;' and the children were surprised to find that they had arrived at Tormouth.





CHAPTER III.

ARTHUR'S FIRST PIPE.

HAVE you ever been to the sea-side? I do not mean to a watering-place; I daresay you may have been to Brighton, but Tormouth was not in the least like Brighton. It was very small; it had no pier, or even jetty, it had no splendid hotel covered with gold, no tall houses, no squares, and only three bathing-machines; you might walk for miles along the beach without meeting anybody but one or two fishermen; yet I think in many ways it was a much pleasanter place than Brighton.

When Cousin Frank arrived at Tormouth with Arthur, Bessie, and George, and, being met by Aunt Harriette, gave over their luggage into the

hands of a porter, and set off walking to Rock Cottage, Aunt Harriette's house, Arthur felt rather disappointed; for although his mamma had advised him not to do so, he had dressed himself in all his best clothes, feeling sure that, as Tormouth was a sea-side place, that he should find lots of people to look at him.

When they arrived at Rock Cottage, Arthur walked away, without asking if he could be of any help to his aunt or sister, while George and Bessie made themselves very busy in unpacking, and Cousin Frank did not think himself too much of a man to carry things up-stairs for them; indeed, they were so merry together that Arthur had much better have stayed with them.

There was no one on the beach to admire Arthur's grey suit and blue necktie but some fishermen, who were sitting in a group of three or four under the shelter of a boat upon the shingles. Arthur walked to the place where they sat, and stood and looked at them, until one of the men observed, ' Well, youngster ?'

Always ' youngster' ! Even at Tormouth already they had found out that he was young.

' What are you doing ?' asked Arthur. ' Is there anything for a fellow to do in a place like this ?'

'Why, it seems to me as we are smoking,' answered the man; 'that's one thing as a fellow may do amongst others.'

'I have not my pipe with me,' said Arthur. He knew very well that he had not any pipe at all, for he had never tried to smoke; but he thought it sounded well.

The men laughed, and one of them said, 'That's a pity, ain't it? I advise you to bring it with you next time.'

Then the men suddenly jumped up, and began shoving the boat down to the water. Their time for rest was over, and they had too much to do to sit there longer. Arthur sauntered away from the beach. He had made up his mind to buy a pipe; he thought that would make him look a man. He soon found a shop, and glancing backwards and on all sides to see that his Cousin Frank was nowhere within sight of him, he went in. The woman laughed when he asked for tobacco, but Arthur tried to look her down; and he returned to the beach with his hands in his pockets, and his pipe ready charged in his mouth. He did not much like the first taste of the tobacco; it was bitter and hot; but that is not much when a boy wishes to be a man. He was glad to see that a party of ladies and children had arrived on the

beach since he had left it, and he walked close to them puffing at his pipe. It was very disagreeable that, as he went by, he heard one of the ladies say,—‘Look at that mere child smoking; I wonder if his mother knows that he is doing so.’

‘Of course not,’ said the other. ‘Why, he cannot be more than ten years old—little simpleton.’

Ten! and he had been twelve last month.

Arthur grew very red, and tried to get out of hearing. He found the beach much more full of people than it had been before, so he had plenty to show off to. He staggered on. He would not have said to himself even that he began to feel sick; but there was no doubt that he did.

‘Hallo, youngster, here you be again!’ said the voice of the same boatman to whom Arthur had spoken half an hour before. He was sitting baiting his lobster-traps with pieces of common fish, such as dog-fish, which are not fit for people to eat. ‘Well, what’s up now?’ asked the man, looking up from his work. ‘Smoking, eh? You’d best not, unless you’re used to it, my little man.’

Arthur tried to smile, but he smiled all on one side, for he was so dreadfully sick.

‘Do you like smoking, master?’ said the boatman, with a grin.



ARTHUR'S FIRST PIPE.—PAGE 28.

'Yes,' answered Arthur faintly, sinking down upon the shingles with his eyes half shut.

'Don't seem like it somehow,' laughed the man; 'best wait till you're a dozen years older, youngster.—Hallo!'

The boatman called out 'Hallo!' because Arthur turned all at once very white, and then was sick on the stones.

The boatman put his hands in his trousers pockets and laughed out loud. He laughed for such a time, at least it seemed such a long time to Arthur, that he thought he would never leave off. He felt very angry at being laughed at, but he was too ill to say anything. He groaned and twisted upon the beach; and the sight of the running water, and the warm sands, and the bright-painted boats, and the smell of the tarred ropes and the stale sea-weeds and the lobster-pots, all made him worse.

'You'd best go home, sir,' observed the boatman.

'I can't; I can't move; leave me alone,' said Arthur.

'It's the baccy as you'd best leave alone, I think,' said the man. 'Tell me where you lives and I'll take you home.'

'Rock Cottage,' said Arthur; 'but I say, you

mustn't tell Aunt Harriette that I have been smoking.'

'Let me alone for that,' said the boatman. 'I won't tell no Aunt Harriette. Get up and I'll give you a helping hand.'

But Arthur could not get up, so the good-natured fisherman took this fine young man in his arms, for the boy was small for his age, and a light weight, and carried him along the beach to Rock Cottage.

Oh, I can tell you, Arthur did not feel comfortable during that journey. To have to meet Cousin Frank, and to hear him laughing at him for being such a goose. If he could have done so, he would have run away to hide himself; but he could not do that, and just as they came near the cottage, Aunt Harriette, who had been wondering why Arthur did not come home to dinner, ran herself to the front door, and looked very frightened when she saw her nephew in the arms of the fisherman.

'What has happened? Is he much hurt?' asked she.

'Nothing, ma'am,' said the man; 'only the young gentleman has been a-mistaking of himself for a man; that's all; and I think he won't trouble you for anything to eat this evening.'

Of course Aunt Harriette knew directly by the smell of the tobacco what had made Arthur ill. She said nothing to him, thinking he was too sick not to be sorry for what he had done ; but she called the maid to help Arthur up-stairs.

‘No, no, mother,’ said Cousin Frank’s kind voice. ‘Don’t call the servant ; I’ll see to him.’

And while Frank undressed him and got him to bed, he never said a word about the smoking ; neither did he in the evening when Arthur was well again, or at any other time ; but he took the pipe out of his little cousin’s jacket pocket and threw it away.

It was not very jolly, as you may think, to pass much of the first day of coming to a new place on the bed, and feeling so sick that he could not touch anything to eat ; but Arthur had to do so, and he felt, instead of a man, very like a silly little boy.



CHAPTER IV.

THE ROW ON THE WATER.

THE next morning Arthur felt all right ; so he soon forgot all about his smoking, and he hoped that everybody else had done so too ; but it was very disagreeable, when he walked along the beach next day, to hear the very same boatmen who had seen him the day before, laugh when he came near, and offer him a whiff of their pipes. The very smell of the tobacco made his head swim, and Jones, the fisherman who had helped him home, said kindly, ‘ There, don’t let’s chaff him, mates ; he’ll know better next time, I’m thinking.—Like to have a pull on the water, sir ?’

‘ Oh yes ; oh yes ! Aunt Harriette, may we ?’ asked George.

Aunt Harriette said they might ; and she no

sooner had said so, than all three of them jumped into a boat ; but as the boat was hauled up upon the shingles, they had to jump out again as quickly ; and they thought they helped the men very much by trying to shove her down to the water.

‘ I may row, mayn't I ? ’ asked Arthur of one of the men ; for there were two in the boat.

‘ Can you, sir ? ’ he asked, looking funnily at Arthur.

‘ Of course I can.’

‘ Better nor you can smoke, I hope ? ’ said the man. ‘ Well, leastways you may try, youngster,’ and Arthur took an oar.

But the very first stroke he caught a crab ; that is, he merely skimmed the water with his oar, and fell backwards into the bottom of the boat.

Nobody could help laughing ; for there was nothing to be seen of Arthur but his two boots sticking up in the air. When he got up he looked very angry, and his face was very red. Jones took the oar from him, and said, ‘ You're very free with your “of courses,” young gentleman. I know'd as you couldn't pull.’

So Arthur's pleasure was again spoilt by his self-conceit. He could not enjoy himself at all, for he fancied every time either of the men looked

at him, he was laughing at him, long after they had forgotten all about it.

After a time, Georgie called out at something that he saw in the water. It was some beautiful jelly-fish, as large as dessert-plates, and showing all sorts of bright colours in the sun. The children tried to catch some of them ; but when Bessie raised one in her hand, she called out and quickly threw it away again, for it stung her fingers like a nettle. Then Jones raised one upon the palm of his hand ; and although Bessie begged him not, because he would be hurt, the boatman did not seem to mind being stung, but only laughed, and held the jelly-fish in the sun. The curious part of it was, that after a little time the jelly-fish all melted away, as if it had been only jelly, and ran through Jones's fingers like water.

'Oh !' said Bessie, 'it cannot be alive. Fancy a live thing melting away in your hand !'

'Do you think it feels, Aunt Harriette ?' asked George.

'I should think not much, my dear,' said Aunt Harriette ; 'but I daresay it can feel that the warm sun is pleasant, as it turns and floats about in it ; so do not destroy any more.'

Presently Aunt Harriette said to one of the boatmen, 'Is this a safe coast ?'

'Well, mum!' said the man, laying down his oar, and spitting into the palm of his hand, at which Bessie laughed, which was rather rude of her; 'well, mum! I should say *not*. You see as there's a tidy strong under-current as sets hereabouts, and it needs to know the coast like to understand it.'

The children did not quite understand what the man said, but they stared at him and listened.

'If you take the water at the right tide,' said the boatman, 'why, well and good; there you are, mum; but it requires a good hand at an oar even then, I reckon. The tide sets uncommon strong sometimes, it do.'

Aunt Harriette and the children were for an hour on the water, and then they turned back.

As George jumped out of the boat he stooped down to look at something amongst the pieces of rocks, and then he called out,—'Aunt Harriette, look here! Arthur, come! What is this little queer thing? Oh, there's a lot of them, dozens all over the stones; and they keep putting out their little tongues at me.'

'Them's barnacles, sir,' said Jones.

'What are they? Are they alive?' asked Bessie.

'They are a sort of little fish, my dear. Yes;

they are alive. What should you say to our setting up a salt-water aquarium whilst you are here ?

‘What’s that ?’ asked George.

‘Not know what an aquarium is, you duffer ?’ said Arthur.

‘Well, then, I don’t. What is it, Aunt Harriette ?’

‘Oh, Arthur will tell you, as he knows all about it,’ said Aunt Harriette, laughing.

‘Well,’ said Arthur, ‘it is a what-do-call-’em full of water and live things.’

‘What is a what-do-call-’em ?’ asked George ; ‘and what sort of live things is it full of, Arthur ?’

‘Well, snails and thingumbobs of different kinds.’

‘Really I am afraid Georgie will not learn much from your account of it, Arthur, though you are so very clever, my dear, so I think I had better tell him myself.’

Arthur saw that his aunt was laughing at him, so he moved away, while Aunt Harriette spoke to his brother and sister.

Aunt Harriette said, ‘Arthur meant to say a tank, that is, a square box, made of anything that will hold water ; generally it is made with glass sides, so that you can see everything inside it. It is filled with water and live things out of the

sea, or, in a fresh-water aquarium, it has water and live things from the river.'

'But do they live and swim about, auntie?'

'Live and swim about, and jump and cut capers in the water. Shall we try to make one?'

'Oh, do let us try. May we begin at once; now, this minute?'

'Where's the tank?' asked Bessie.

'Ah,' said her aunt, looking very sly, 'I know all about that. I saw an empty one in the lumber-room only last week. Frank will manage it all for us.'

'Oh, where is Cousin Frank? I wish he was with us. Where can we find Cousin Frank?' said Georgie.

'Here,' said a voice, as gruff as Frank could make it, and their cousin jumped up suddenly from behind a boat, which so startled Bessie that she tumbled back into the sea.

Frank soon picked her up; and she ran home to change her clothes and to get a basket.

'Arthur, my dear,' said Aunt Harriette, 'you had better change your clothes also. We may perhaps get very wet and dirty, and you have on your best suit.'

Half an hour afterwards all were ready to go, Bessie carrying a basket and Georgie a pickle-

bottle, round the neck of which was a string by which to carry it, and their aunt a tin pot.

Cousin Frank had a little landing net, which Georgie begged to take from him, as it looked so like business. No one at the moment of starting had time to notice that Arthur had not changed his clothes. It was only when they got to the place where a number of large boulders, or pieces of rock, were on the sands that Aunt Harriette said, 'Arthur, why did not you do as I told you?'

'I can very well take care of these clothes,' said Arthur. 'I am not a child. I don't choose to be seen in those old horrid things; they are quite shabby.'

'To begin with, there is nobody to see you,' Aunt Harriette answered, 'and if there were I daresay no one would notice whether your clothes are old or new. People don't trouble themselves much about schoolboys, I can assure you. I have a great mind to send you back now to change your things.'

Arthur looked sulky, and jerked his head; and little Bessie said,—'Please don't send him home, auntie. Perhaps he will not make his clothes dirty.'

'Of course I shall not,' said Arthur. 'I suppose I can take care of my things as well as anybody else.'

‘Very well,’ said Aunt Harriette; ‘then mind you do, Arthur, and I will not say any more about it now; but I wish you would learn that there is nothing more childish and unlike a man than not knowing how to obey. A person who cannot obey is never likely to make a man worth anything. There never was a great man yet who had not learnt to obey before he could command.’

I am sorry to say that Arthur was rude enough to walk away even before his aunt had finished speaking. He ought to have had his ears boxed; but his Aunt Harriette did not think him worth further notice, for she turned to Georgie and said, —‘Be careful how you walk, for these boulders are very slimy with sea-weed. We must find some pretty little pieces of rock with sea-weed on them to carry home for our tank.’

‘Oh, I can find lots of sea-weed,’ said George, picking up a great bunch at his feet. ‘We will have it of all different colours.’

‘But that will not live, my dear. It has no root unless it is fastened to a piece of stone. It would soon make the water smell nasty.’

‘Aunt Harriette, have sea-weeds roots? where do they grow, then?’

‘At the bottom of the sea.’

‘ Oh, I should like to see the bottom of the sea !
What else has it ? tell me.’

‘ Shell-fish crawling about, and crabs, and coral,
and oysters, and all sorts of things.’

‘ What is this, auntie ? Look, it is quite soft ;
but it was like a sort of flower. I am sure it was
till I touched it.’

‘ Flower !’ said Arthur, who had not yet got
over his temper. ‘ What bosh ! It is a lump of
sea-weed or something ; pull it off the rock.’

‘ No, don’t do anything of the kind. Bessie is
quite right ; it is a sort of flower. Arthur, when
will you learn not to contradict when you know
nothing about a thing ? You only show your
ignorance. If you were to pull it off the stone
you would kill it, for it is a living animal.’

‘ Well, anyhow, it looks very disgusting ; like a
piece of old liver,’ said Arthur.

His aunt laughed. ‘ It is frightened ; and no
one looks very pretty when frightened. It has
drawn itself outside in. Look, children, it is
going to open again.’

As the children looked, the creature began to
open ; at first it put out little things like tiny
fingers ; then more and more, until it was full of
little leaves all round like a double flower ; then
there came a middle to it, with little dots of bright
blue, like beads.

'How pretty!' said Bessie; 'I wish we could take it home, and it would live in our tank.'

'So we will,' said her aunt; 'only we must also take the stone to which it is sticking.'

The stone was not a very big one; so she pulled it up and placed it in a little pool of seawater, that they might call for it again when they returned that way.

It was wonderful what treasures the children found that day. They picked up several more stones with sea-flowers upon them, and carried them back to the same pool, so that at last they had quite a party of them; but they were not all alike: some were very tiny ones indeed, just like little daisies, and some were large, and spotted with light and dark red, and looked something like strawberries. Then Frank found a large prawn and a little prawn; and George did not know at all what they were, until his aunt told him; then he said,—'But, auntie, I have often seen prawns, and they are not at all this colour; they are pink.'

'That is when they are boiled, you little goose.'

'But why should boiling them turn them red, Aunt Harriette?'

'That I can't tell you; I suppose it is something of which they are made which turns red with

the heat, for their flesh becomes pink as well as the shell.'

Georgie was half afraid of touching the prawns, for they looked so fierce ; so Cousin Frank had to catch them for him and put them in the bottle. Then they found a large shell, and inside it was a little crab. That was easily carried ; for Bessie could take hold of the shell, while the crab kicked out his arms and legs as if he was quite in a rage at being carried away without asking his leave.

Then Aunt Harriette told them to pick up a dozen periwinkles, of which there were quantities crawling about.

' I don't think periwinkles are pretty, auntie,' said Bessie ; ' they are so like snails. I don't care about having them in the tank.'

' But, my dear, like many other plain things, periwinkles are very useful ; indeed, we could not keep the tank in order without them. They will have to be the house-maids, and do all the cleaning of the aquarium.'

They were not half tired of looking for fresh things, when Aunt Harriette found it was past dinner-time. Just as she said so, they heard a noise and a cry of ' Oh ! ' and when they all looked round, there was Arthur sprawling upon his hands and knees, with his best grey suit, upon the boul-

ders. He scrambled up again, but oh the horrible mess and slime he was in ! Nobody could help laughing, although it was really no laughing matter.

‘ That comes of your disobedience,’ said Aunt Harriette. ‘ You felt so sure you could take care of your own clothes.’

‘ Well, I didn’t fall on purpose,’ said Arthur.

‘ Of course you didn’t, but you disobeyed orders on purpose. A nice state your clothes will be in for Sunday. There will be no time to have them washed before then, for to-day is Friday. Go home and take them off at once, that I may see what can be done to them ; and you will have to wear your old ones this afternoon.’

So Arthur had no choice but to do as he was told, or to sit at home all the rest of the day ; and he got tired of doing that, for it was a lovely day. He kept fancying that everybody was looking at him and talking about his clothes, when I dare say not one of the people in Tormouth noticed whether he was there or not. There are plenty of boys and to spare in the world, without anybody troubling themselves much about the dress of one or other of them, so long as a boy is clean ; but Arthur was so dreadfully conceited, that I am much afraid it will bring him into worse trouble some day than merely spoiling his best grey suit.



CHAPTER V.

THE AQUARIUM.

THAT afternoon they sent a little boy to the sea to bring a couple of pails of sea-water ; and Aunt Harriette and the children arranged the pieces of stone and the sea-weeds in the tank, and then placed in it all the living creatures they had picked up.

It was very pretty to see the sea-anemones, that is, the sea-flowers, put out all their little arms when they found themselves in the nice cool water. They had not liked the little basin in which they had been kept.

Then the prawns were very amusing ; for they looked as if they had put themselves into a violent rage, or had gone mad, as soon as Bessie turned them into the tank. They darted about,

and round and round, and in and out, and against the stones, as if they would knock their brains out. Then they went and had a look at the hermit-crab, but they did not seem to like him, for they darted away again.

‘Why does the little crab get into a shell?’ asked Bessie.

‘He lives there to protect himself from larger animals, who might eat him. Do you know, the hermit-crab is a very clever little fellow. When he grows too large for his shell, he goes in search of another. If he finds an empty one, he goes in at once, but sometimes he will take a fancy to a shell which has another crab in it already. Then they fight until one is driven away or killed. It is very rude of him to turn another out of his home; is it not? But he will do it if he can.’

‘Oh, auntie, look! The prawns are fighting, and poking at each other with their horns,’ said Georgie.

‘Oh how angry the big one is! Look how he sticks his horns out!’ said Arthur.

It was quite true; the prawns were fighting a duel. It was a great shame, for the little one was half the size of his enemy, and of course had not much chance. All at once a piece of the little one disappeared down the throat of the big one,

and then more and more, until the little prawn's head was gone.

‘Well, I do call that a shame!’ said Georgie. ‘If he isn’t eating up his little brother! Cannot we pull him out again, auntie?’

‘I am afraid it is too late, my dear, for the little prawn is most likely dead, or nearly so.’

‘He can’t swallow him though, auntie. Look, I believe he is choking, and it serves him right too.’

The large prawn here struggled and whisked about, and then began again darting through the tank, still holding the little one half swallowed in his mouth. The funny part of it was that the prawn, being quite clear, the part of the little prawn which had been swallowed could be seen through the big one, inside his throat.

The children seemed never tired of watching the creatures in the aquarium. I think they spent the whole of that afternoon in front of the tank; and the whole of the afternoon the large prawn went about with his little friend sticking half out of his mouth, so I don’t think he could have much enjoyed his dinner.

The periwinkles, instead of doing their duty as housemaids, spent all their time in crawling up the sides of the glass; and when they got to the

top, they sat on the edge of the tank and looked about the room in a most idle manner, so that they had to be every now and then knocked back into the water, and even then they were at it again in a minute or so.

And the sea-anemones would take a piece of meat out of the hand of one of the children. They did not seem to have any mouths, but they gathered the meat into themselves with their little arms; and they did not seem to have any eyes, yet they were very quick in finding out that there was something to eat near them.

All at once Cousin Frank came in.

‘Still looking at the creatures?’ said he. ‘I was going to ask who is coming for a walk this evening.’

Everybody seemed inclined to go, so they soon set out.

While they were on the beach, looking at the water, and throwing pebbles into it, Cousin Frank said, ‘Can any of you youngsters swim?’

‘Oh, do teach me to swim, Cousin Frank,’ said Georgie. ‘I want to learn so much.’

‘So I will, my boy.—Can you swim, Arthur?’

Arthur did not like to say ‘No.’ He never had the courage to confess that he could not do anything; so he answered, ‘Not much;’ and he

hoped by saying that, he was avoiding telling an actual falsehood, as if anything that is untrue can be less than a falsehood.

‘Very well ; we’ll have a swimming-match to-morrow morning,’ said Frank. ‘How far can you swim, Arthur ; as far as those piles ?’

‘Yes, I suppose,’ said Arthur, looking away, and feeling rather red.

Bessie opened her eyes, for she had not known that her brother could swim.

The next day Arthur felt rather nervous after breakfast, when George reminded his cousin of his promise ; but even then he had not the courage to admit that he had no idea of swimming.

‘You’ll be very careful, Frank, will you not ?’ said Aunt Harriette, as they were about to leave the house.

‘Oh dear yes, mother,’ he answered. ‘I will not let go Georgie for a minute ; and as to Arthur, he tells me he can swim a little.’

‘Oh, that is all right, then, my dear,’ said Aunt Harriette. ‘I only was afraid that you could not undertake two at once.’

Arthur was rather a long time undressing, so that Cousin Frank and Georgie were in the water some time before he was ready, for he was trying to put off the moment of going in. Georgie called

to him several times, so that at length Arthur had to leave off making excuses and to take to the water.

George was a plucky little boy, and when his head went souse under the waves, he came up spluttering and laughing. Of course he could not learn to swim all at once; but he took his first lesson, and then leaving him to play about, Cousin Frank turned to Arthur.

'Now,' said he, 'swim out with me. I will keep close to you, so that you need not be nervous.'

Cousin Frank swam two or three strokes, and looked round for Arthur. He was still in the same place where he had been.

'Come on,' said Frank.

'I can't go out so far,' said Arthur. 'It is all very well for you, but I should be out of my depth.'

'Why, you don't expect to swim in your depth, do you?' asked Frank. 'I thought you said you could swim a little.'

'I can't swim out to where you are; and I won't,' said Arthur sulkily.

'I don't believe you can swim a stroke,' said his cousin; 'but whether you can or not, try to come out to me. You cannot come to any harm,

for I can lay hold of you in a moment if you should go under.'

But Arthur stood where he was, up to his middle in the water, and would not move.

'Tell me the truth at once,' said Cousin Frank angrily. 'Have you ever tried to swim before?'

No answer.

'I'll thrash you if you don't,' said Cousin Frank.

'No,' said Arthur.

'Do you wish to learn to swim? Do you wish me to teach you?'

'No!' said Arthur.

'Very well; you are a little deceitful humbug,' answered Cousin Frank, 'and I think George is worth two of you. Put on your clothes at once, and go home.'

Arthur was afraid to disobey, and Cousin Frank did not speak to him for the rest of the day; but he was too kind to tell his mother about Arthur's folly, so Aunt Harriette only thought that her nephew had had a very short swimming lesson, and asked no questions.



CHAPTER VI.

A TALK UPON THE BEACH.



SAY, Georgie,' said Bessie, 'do you know the cook is making a plum-cake, and she says it is for us?'

Georgie ran directly to the kitchen to look at the cake.

'Is it for tea, cook?' he asked. 'Oh do give me a little piece now.'

'What! unbaked, sir?' asked cook. 'No; it isn't for tea, Master George. It is for to-morrow. To-morrow will be Sunday, you know. We always have cake on Sundays.'

'May not we begin it to-night, please, cook?' said greedy Georgie.

'Oh dear no, it is much too good for common days,' said cook, laughing, and opening the oven-door to put the cake in.

'Hallo, Master Georgie!' called out Cousin

Frank, as he passed through the kitchen ; ' have you smelt out the cake ? You are to go to the beach, for your aunt told me she wants you.'

Georgie went away, followed by Bessie. Aunt Harriette was sitting on the shingles waiting for them.

' Look there, auntie,' said George, ' there is a ship. What is it ?'

' I think it is a little vessel laden with coals,' said Aunt Harriette. ' I have seen a great many since I have been here. Do you know where coals come from, Bessie ?'

' Yes, of course, auntie,' said the little girl, quite ashamed that her aunt should think she did not know. ' Of course from Newcastle ; that is in the geography-book.'

' Do you know what coal is made of ?'

' No,' said Georgie. ' Tell us, Aunt Harriette ; tell us everything about it.'

' Well,' said their aunt, ' many, many years ago—'

' Before we were born ?'

' Before you were born, Bessie.'

' But not before you were born, auntie ?'

' Yes, Georgie, even before that.'

' That must have been a very great many years ago, then,' said Georgie gravely.

Aunt Harriette laughed ; and began again,—
‘Many, many years ago, by some means, earthquakes or floods, the earth buried up great huge forests of trees. You would think that the forests being buried were wasted and lost ; but nothing is lost. The trees stayed under the ground for all these years ; and then have been dug up again turned into coal for us to burn. Did you ever see a picture of a coal-mine, children ?’

‘No, auntie ; tell us.’

‘I have seen better than a picture : I once saw a real mine.’

‘Did you ? What was it like ?’

‘I had to be let down into it by a sort of trap fastened with chains. Each of us carried a lantern with us ; and we wanted it : for as we went farther down, it got darker and darker, until we were in the middle of black walls.’

‘Coals ?’

‘Yes, Georgie ; coal. The walls were coal, and the floor was coal, and the roof was coal, excepting for the little opening through which we had come, which looked very far away. On all sides were men working ; hammering away, and knocking the coal out with pickaxes, and every stroke they gave echoed through the mine, so that it seemed like one great long noise. The working

men stopped, and came to look at us for a moment, holding each of them a lantern. Of course, they were all very black. There were waggons with horses going backwards and forwards, and little children running about ; and it looked like some village full of people, all busily working—only they had no sun to work by. Do you know, Bessie, that these men who work in the coal-mines very seldom see the sun rise ? The bell rings for them to go down into the pit whilst it is still dark, and, of course, they never see the sun down in the mine.'

'I should not like that, auntie ; it must be very dull,' said Georgie ; 'but they are not mine-men on board that little ship, are they ?'

'No ; the miners have nothing to do with bringing the coal away.'

'Tell us more, auntie.'

'I do not know what more to tell you, children, excepting that dreadful accidents happen sometimes in the mines. Men have been buried alive in the pit, or crushed to death, or choked with bad air.'

'I should not like any one of those things,' said Georgie ; 'when I am a man, I won't be anything of that sort ; I shall do something where I am not likely to be killed. I would like to be a sailor, or

a boatman like Jones, or like one of those men in that coal-ship. I think the sea is jolly !'

'I daresay, my dear,' said Aunt Harriette, 'that each one of the callings you have mentioned is full of dangers ; but we can be in no real danger, you know, if we are God's children, Georgie ; because God is our Father for the other world as well as this one.'

'Auntie,' said Bessie, who had not spoken for some time, 'can you tell stories ?'

'Not so well as Frank can, Bessie ; but perhaps I can tell you a story.' And Aunt Harriette told them what I am going to tell you, while the children lay upon the beach, with their little heads against her knees.

'There was once a little boy of only six years old,' said Aunt Harriette, 'whose name was Johnny.'

'There came a very bad fever into the place where Johnny lived ; and his papa and mamma both took the fever, and died ; and the little boy was left alone.

'He had said to his papa before he died, "Why do you go away from me ; where are you going to ?" and his papa answered, "I am going to heaven, my little child. I am going to God ; to Jesus Christ and all the angels."

‘ Then little Johnny gave a great deep sigh ; and said, “ Oh, I wish I was going to heaven too.” ’

‘ Then a few days afterwards Johnny’s papa and mamma were taken away, and their bodies were put in the churchyard, and when Johnny came home again, the house was empty.

‘ No one dared take Johnny away from the house for fear he should carry the fever with him ; and the neighbours had enough to do to think of themselves without coming near Johnny ; so there was only a cross old woman who used to come every day and clean the house and cook the dinner ; and every day was dull now, for so many people had the fever.

‘ For several days the cross old woman cooked the dinner, and the little boy would not eat any of it, so she called him dainty and fractious, and ate it all herself.

‘ One day she came in the morning more cross than usual, and Johnny had not put the kettle on to boil, for his head ached and his little hands burned, and he forgot all about the kettle. Then the old woman was very angry, and she caught up the broomstick and beat Johnny with it.

‘ The little boy gave a loud cry and ran out of the cottage, for he had never been beaten with a broomstick before, and he was afraid of the old woman.

‘ He ran on and on a long distance, never looking which way he went, until he found himself in a wood. He was so tired, his legs felt as if they would bend under him and as if he should fall to the ground. He lay down, and the tired feeling got more and more; and he forgot that he was in the wood, and forgot all about the cross old woman and the beating with the broomstick.

‘ All at once Johnny stood by the open gate of a beautiful garden. The gates were so shining and so bright that he could hardly look at them; but within the gates were lovely green fields, with shady trees, and trees covered with fruits of every kind, peaches and plums and grapes, and gardens of flowers of every colour growing everywhere. And troops of little boys and girls came running from amongst the trees, smiling and playing, and walking hand in hand, all dressed in white, with wreaths of flowers in their hair. And lovely music seemed to fill the garden, though Johnny could not see where the music came from. Then he cried out loud, as he stretched his arms out towards the little happy children, “ Oh, I am a very lonely little boy; my papa and mamma are both gone away to heaven and to God, to Jesus and all the angels, and I am quite alone.”

‘ Then there came up to him a very kind man,

who said to him, in a loving voice, "Would you wish to come here amongst all these little ones, my child?" and he laid his hand upon Johnny's head, and Johnny awoke with a great sob, and he was lying upon the grass in the wood.

'The rain had been falling fast, and the little boy was quite wet through, and when he tried to get up and walk his legs were stiff, and he fell down again, and lay still as if he could not move. The thunder and lightning began, and the wind whistled through the trees, and twirled off the dead leaves and branches. There was such a noise that no one could have heard the voice of little Johnny amidst the storm; but God heard it—a very weak little voice, through fever and fear, but it reached Him: "Oh, take me where papa and mamma have gone—to heaven and to God, to Jesus and the angels."

'When little Johnny was found in the wood the next day, when the storm was over, his body was quite dead; and he had gone to that lovely garden with the happy little children dressed in white—to Jesus and all the angels.



CHAPTER VII.

THE WRECK OF THE COLLIER.

AUNT HARRIETTE and Frank and the rest had not been asleep more than half their usual time when Georgie waked up suddenly, and said to his brother Arthur, who slept in the same room, 'There is a gun firing.'

'Don't talk nonsense,' said Arthur crossly, at being roused from his sleep. 'Who would fire guns at this time of night? Hold your tongue and go to sleep.'

'There is another,' said Georgie presently, waking up again, for he had gone to sleep for half a minute betweenwhiles. He said no more to Arthur, but jumped out of bed and ran into his aunt Harriette's room.

He found her standing by the window. She

had drawn up the blind. It was hardly yet daylight, but being summer-time you could see things outside, not very plainly.

‘Georgie,’ said Aunt Harriette, turning to him, ‘do you remember seeing a vessel laden with coals yesterday when we were on the beach?’

Georgie did remember, and he said ‘Yes,’ and ran to the window where his aunt was standing.

‘Why, there it is! there it is!’ said he, looking out. ‘I can see the ship quite well. What does that mean, auntie?’ he asked, as a bright flash came from the vessel, and the noise sounded again. ‘I heard guns in my bedroom. Is that a gun? Arthur said it wasn’t; but I was sure it was guns.’

‘I think it was a rocket, my dear,’ said Aunt Harriette. ‘I am afraid the vessel is in distress.’

‘What do you mean, auntie?’

‘She has got upon some rocks, I am afraid. You remember the man Jones said that this coast is not safe.’

Just then the woman of the house rushed in. She was dressed up very funnily; with a man’s coat dragged over her shoulders, and a very big nightcap with wide frills on her head, so that George, and Bessie, who had joined them, stared at her.

'Oh, ma'am! oh, ma'am!' she said, wringing her hands and crying, 'the Pretty Polly is on the rocks, and it is such a terrible night; and my brother is the captain of her, and he is aboard. Oh dear, oh dear! what ever shall I do?'

'But surely there will be many to help; and the rocks are not far from shore,' said Aunt Harriette.

'The Polly will never live to land the men,' said the landlady. 'Oh dear, oh dear!'

And that was all that she would do, sit on the edge of Aunt Harriette's bed and wring her hands and cry, 'Oh dear, oh dear!' Aunt Harriette tried to say all she could to comfort her, but she seemed to take no notice. Then she all at once jumped up and ran out of the room, and out of the house; and Georgie saw her running wildly along the beach, the frill of her nightcap flapping in the wind.

By this time Arthur was dressed and in the room; and Aunt Harriette's two servants, the cook and the housemaid, were there also, both crying, and both talking.

'My good women,' said Aunt Harriette, 'of what use is all this noise? Do try to leave off crying. Go and call Mr. Frank.'

Arthur answered, 'Frank is not in the house,

auntie. I suppose he has gone to help ; I am going also ; they will want men.'

Aunt Harriette did not laugh at Arthur then ; she only answered, ' Yes, go by all means, my dear boy ; you may be of use.'

' And cannot I help too ?' asked little Georgie.

' I doubt if you can be of any use, my dear ; you and Bessie had better go back to your beds.'

' I couldn't, auntie,' said Bessie ; ' and these poor men might all be drowned.'

' Then put on your clothes,' said Aunt Harriette, ' for you are shivering now, and you will be catching cold. Georgie and you go and dress.'

The children returned shortly after to their aunt's room ; but Aunt Harriette was not there. She had gone down to the hall-door, thinking to look on from a distance, but had been obliged to go near to the place where the ' Pretty Polly' was rolling about.

Almost without thinking of what they did, the little ones also rushed to the spot.

As little Bessie passed through the hall, she caught hold of a railway rug which was lying upon a chair ; for it was a cold-feeling night, and she thought it looked soft and warm. It was cold although it was summer-time, for the wind was very sharp, and there was a nasty little drizzling rain falling.

When the children arrived at the place where the crowd was, they did not at first see their aunt ; but they saw Cousin Frank amongst about a hundred people helping to pull at a rope.

For, just as they reached the spot, the people gave a great cheer ; that is, they called out ' Hurrah ! ' for they had, after trying a great many times without being able to do it, at last got a rope to catch to the top of the mast of the collier.

The collier was the little ship laden with coals.

Georgie and Bessie could understand nothing at first. They could not see their aunt, but they could see poor Mrs. Stubbs ; they knew her by her great night-cap frills ; and after a time it grew lighter, although it was still raining very fast indeed ; and Aunt Harriette saw the children standing gazing, and she all at once stood by Bessie's side, and took her hand.

' You ought not to be here, dear child,' she said.

' Oh, do let us stay, auntie,' said both the children ; ' it will be so miserable to go back to the house and hear the wind, and not know what is going on.'

Aunt Harriette seemed to think so too, for she looked about a little, then seeing a large boat belonging to one of the fishermen close by on the

beach covered over with a sailcloth, she made the little girl and boy climb into it, and then arranged the sail over them, leaving a place from which they could look out without getting wet, and where they would be warm and comfortable out of the wind.

As it grew lighter, those on the beach could see plainly all the men of the vessel standing on her. There were seven men and a little boy.

There was a basket slung upon the rope, which had been fastened to the top of the mast; and into this basket, as soon as it reached the brig, the men on board helped the little boy first, because he was the smallest. That was good of them, was it not? But Englishmen are always brave.

Then the crowd on shore began to pull in a rope which was tied to the basket as fast as ever they could, so that the basket, with the little boy in it, slid along the other rope towards them.

All the men upon the beach pulled away at the rope as hard as ever they could, for they had no time to lose; and it was stiff work, because the wind was very strong and the rope strained, so that the poor little ship could not bear it. She rocked from side to side, and reeled about, and seemed as if she was going to fall over quite into the sea.



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Bessie wondered that all the men on the beach were so very silent. All this time they never said a word until the little boy was out of the basket, and was jumping about on the shingles to warm himself, and then they only called out in a sharp way, 'Quick, quick!' as they slung up the basket again upon the tight rope; and the men of the collier began pulling it back on board.

It seemed such a very very long time before another was in the basket, and being hauled on shore, and the little saved boy kept calling out to him as he came along through the air, 'Is that you, father? Father, is that you?'

When the man was landed, he answered the boy, 'No, my lad; father wouldn't get in. He says he'll stay to the last, and do his duty by the Polly, if he dies for it. Tom Watson is the one as will come next.'

Then the little boy was silent for a time, but when the basket came again he could not help calling out once more, 'Is that you, father? Father, is that you?' for he hoped his father might have changed his mind and taken Tom Watson's place. All this while Cousin Frank was amongst those who were pulling at the rope. Arthur was also helping, having forgotten for the time to think about himself. Bessie saw them,

and turned to her aunt, who was standing near, and said, 'Oh, auntie, if I could only do something; it is so dreadful only to look on. I wish I was a boy, I do so much, and then I could pull at the rope as Arthur does. Oh, auntie, do you think any of the men will be drowned? it is so dreadful!'

'Yes; it is very dreadful, dear,' said Aunt Harriette, in a low voice. 'Bessie, ask God to save them all, every one of them. You can do that for them, my child.' Then Bessie found that there was something even she could do.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRAVE CAPTAIN.

THE basket upon the rope went backwards and forwards from the shore to the ship and from the ship to the shore, each time bringing a man.

Such a long, long time it seemed ; and poor Mrs. Stubbs, the landlady, who had been all the time upon the beach, was wringing her hands and crying, and sometimes running forward into the surf, out of which she was pulled by one of the men ; for she could not by nearly drowning herself help her brother ; and each time the basket came to shore the little boy of the brig again started forward, crying out, ‘ Father, is that you ? ’

Now, at last all six of the men stood on the beach, and only the captain of the collier was left.

The ship swayed more than ever from side to side ; it seemed as if she could never hold out long enough for the last brave man to be brought away ; and it was in very hoarse voices that the men called out, ' Quick now ! Steady, my lads ! Altogether ! Yo-ho ! '

Georgie and Bessie had crawled nearly out of the sailcloth, but it did not so much matter now, for it had nearly left off raining. They watched the basket so eagerly, with their eyes so fixed upon it, that they had not noticed that they had been alone for some time. Aunt Harriette had run back to the house. The captain seemed a long time climbing into the basket. I suppose his poor legs and arms were numbed with the cold and wet, being only half-dressed. Everybody held their breaths until he gave the signal to pull ; then they pulled indeed, but it seemed to be pulling in vain, for each time the collier swayed the mast was rocked backwards and forwards, and the basket, with the skipper in it, went souse under the water, while the ship was nearly on her side for the time.

And all this time the only sound that was heard was the shrill voice of little Bessie, who from praying to herself had taken to praying aloud.

'Oh pray God save him! Oh pray God do not let him be drowned!'

'That's right, little one,' said a kind voice by Bessie's side. 'It is only God can save him, for he'll never get to shore except by the help of God.'

It was a great rough-looking man who spoke, but his voice was not rough; and Bessie put out her little hand from under the sail and held his.

'He's almost dead with cold and wet by this time, I'm thinking,' said the man, 'for I doubt he has no more clothes upon him than the others.'

The rest of the men all stood in their trousers and shirts only; but they had, I fancy, been thinking too much of the danger of the captain to care much about the cold.

There was suddenly a great scream from all the crowd; for the mast of the collier could not bear the strain of the wind any longer, and broke, and went overboard, and the captain and the basket were sent under water, and Bessie thought that all was over.

But the men went on hauling, and after a time the captain came to the top of the water; for he had fast hold of the rope; and several men ran into the sea up to their waists, they did not care for the cold and the wet, and with them, amongst the first of them, Bessie saw her brother Arthur

and Cousin Frank. Did she not feel proud of them then ?

The captain was caught and brought to land, and then there was such a cheer ! The men cheered as if they were all one man ; and that man didn't care if he cracked his lungs. Bessie could not help joining her little squeaky voice also in the cheer,—and then, immediately afterwards, she burst out crying, and turning round to look for her aunt, for the first time found that she was gone.

The captain had not been on land more than five minutes, when the poor ship rolled over on her side ; the big waves came up and swallowed her—above the deck, above the masts ; and nothing at all of her was seen ; and the water dashed backwards and forwards across the place where she had been such a little while ago.





CHAPTER IX.

ARTHUR'S OLD ENEMY.

BESSIE had hardly left off wondering where her aunt had gone, when Aunt Harriette came back again, and with her came Mrs. Stubbs, who had run home whenever she had seen that her brother was safely on shore.

Mrs. Stubbs had in her arms a very large basket, and she was followed by cook with another large basket; both of them piled up with thick slices of bread and cheese. Aunt Harriette had in one hand a large tin water-can, and in the other she held five or six drinking-mugs. It was very clear what she and the cook had been doing; for from the spout of the water-can there came a lot of smoke and a sweet warm smell of tea.

As soon as the men knew that this was all for

them, they crowded round Aunt Harriette and the other women, so that they could hardly give out bread and cheese, and pour out tea fast enough.

Of course all the men who had been so many hours pulling at the rope, and standing in the cold wind and rain, were very tired and hungry and thirsty ; but they gave food and drink first to the men who had been saved from the wreck, as if they did not think of themselves at all ; but most of all they seemed to wish to give it to the captain, so that he might have had six mugs of tea at once if he could have drunk them. Little Bessie caught sight of the captain for a moment, as the men moved a little, and she saw that he was lying upon the beach, and his eyes were shut.

‘Oh dear ! oh dear !’ she cried ; ‘he is dead ; I am sure he is.’

‘No, little miss,’ said the kind man who had spoken to her before ; ‘he is not dead ; it is the cold. Carry him to the “Lion,” mates.’

The ‘Lion’ was an inn built near the Esplanade, as the beach walk was called.

Bessie was still dragging the railway rug by one corner ; she had not remembered it till now.

‘Here, take this ; wrap him up in this,’ she said, pulling forward the rug. Then, as she looked at the pale face of the captain, she clasped

her hands together and said, 'Oh pray God save him!'

'That's it; that's the sort of thing,' said Jones the fisherman, who had been covering the skipper with his jacket; he was almost the only man there who had a jacket with him.

Then they lifted the captain in their arms and carried him away. Bessie wished she might have followed him, but she turned towards home, when her aunt called her, and in a few minutes they were in the house.

Aunt Harriette put both Georgie and the little girl at once into bed, lest they should catch colds, although they had been kept so warm and safe all the time under the sailcloth. Bessie thought that she should never go to sleep, because she felt so full of thoughts, and it was broad daylight, but she had not been ten minutes in bed before she had forgotten everything.

Then Arthur came running home to say that the captain of the collier brig was all right and coming round nicely, and that Jones had said he would do quite well now; and as soon as ever Aunt Harriette saw him she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him a great many times, and said, 'Arthur, my dear boy, my dear brave boy! I feel so proud of you for your manly conduct during the storm.'

And then Mrs. Stubbs said, ' He's a noble boy, ma'am, and a boy to be proud of, I'm sure. No full-grown gentleman, not your own handsome son, ma'am, which he is the finest gent I ever clapped eyes on, couldn't have behaved more braver and worked more harder than he have; and to see the two of 'em run into the water when I thought every minute my poor brother would be drowned—it was just like a picture.'

Arthur felt inclined to cry, but he thought that would not be 'like a full-grown gentleman,' so he laughed it off, and said it did not matter; but he felt very pleased at his Aunt Harriette's praises and at Mrs. Stubbs's speech, although there was so little grammar in it, and, more than all, that she put his name and that of Cousin Frank together.

So you see Arthur got the credit of manliness when he had forgotten all about himself, and thought only of doing his duty, when he might try for ever to pass off for a man by his self-conceit, and yet only be laughed at for a foolish boy. Even Cousin Frank, who came home shortly afterwards, shook Arthur by the hand, and said, ' Arthur, you are a brick! You will make a fine fellow yet, my boy, if you'll only shake off your good opinion of yourself.'

But I am rather afraid Arthur was a boy who

could not bear praise very well. Aunt Harriette took him into the sitting-room and gave him some breakfast, and then he fell asleep upon the sofa. Cousin Frank was already asleep upon the floor. When Arthur woke, some hours after, Bessie and Georgie were in the room, and Arthur remembered directly all that had happened, for it was so new to him that his mind was full of it.

‘What are you doing?’ he asked of his sister.

‘Oh, Artie, you are awake! We are looking at the anemones. Do come and look at them, they are so pretty,’ said little Bess.

‘One of your periwinkles will be out, if you do not take care,’ said Arthur, without moving from the sofa.

‘Oh, he will do it. If I go away a minute he crawls up to look about him. He is the worst behaved of any of them.’

‘How are the prawns getting on?’ asked Arthur.

‘Oh, Artie,’ Bessie answered, ‘it is so horrid, the big one has been sick and has spit out the little one. It serves him right. I am so glad; it will teach him another time, I hope, not to eat up his brother.’

Arthur laughed. ‘Is the little one alive, then?’ he asked.

‘Oh dear no,’ said Bessie, ‘he is quite dead. How could he be alive after being swallowed for a whole day? He is quite dead and limp, poor little fellow! and his head tumbled off when I took him out of the water. Look, Artie, here he is,’ said Bessie, showing the body of the prawn.

‘Do come here and help, Artie,’ said Georgie, who had both hands in the water, ‘I cannot keep these stones up.’

‘No, my dear; I am too tired,’ answered Arthur in his most conceited voice. ‘You forget, child, how I have been working. You should not ask a fellow to move about after such a night as last night.’

‘Yes; you did work!’ said the little girl, looking at him with very large eyes.

‘I should rather think I did!’

‘Oh, you are famous,’ said Bessie.

‘I should think auntie and the rest of them will hardly persist still in looking on me as a child,’ said Arthur.

‘Auntie said that you were a manly, noble boy. I heard her say so. I did wish last night that I could have been you.’

‘Girls can’t expect to be of any use,’ said Arthur. ‘I daresay there are all sorts of things thrown up after the storm, lots of beautiful seaweeds.’

'I should like to pick up some,' said Bessie ;
'do come on the beach, Arthur.'

'I can't, my child ; I am too tired.'

'I wonder if we might go,' said Georgie ; 'I am not tired a bit ; but we cannot ask auntie, because I know she is lying down ; and Cousin Frank is asleep.'

All at once Arthur changed his mind. 'Yes, I think I will go too,' said he ; 'I feel restless, and would sooner be out in the air ; so come along, little ones.' This he said in his most old-fashioned way, and moving quietly so as not to wake their cousin, the three children wandered away from the house.

They felt too tired to do anything but stroll about ; and they could talk of nothing else but the wreck of the collier, and the danger of the men, which gave Arthur occasion to speak a good deal of the manly way in which he himself had acted.

Now there is no doubt but that Arthur had behaved very well ; but do you not see that he very much spoilt his nice conduct by being so conceited about it ? He should have let some one else say all that he had to say on the subject.



CHAPTER X.

THE CHILDREN FORGET THAT IT IS SUNDAY.

THERE was, as Arthur had thought, a great deal of sea-weed thrown up ; and for a time the children picked it up ; every now and then finding a prettier piece than the rest, until they got tired ; for there was so much of it.

They kept thinking and talking of the wreck instead of the sea-weed. Arthur said all at once, ' Let us go to the place where the wreck was last night.'

' Yes ; perhaps the ship has come up out of the sea again,' said George.

But there was nothing to be seen of the ship when they got to the place. They could find nothing, not even a piece of wood or of rope.

' I wonder none of the fishermen go out to

fish to-day; the water is quite smooth,' said Georgie.

You see all the children had quite forgotten that the day was Sunday; for they had been asleep when the church-bells rang in the morning, and everything was so unlike Sunday that it was not odd that they did not think of it.

'They have none of them been out at all,' said Bessie. 'Look, there are all the boats.'

'Yes, Jones has,' said Arthur. 'There is Jones's boat hauled down to the water's edge. I know this is his boat, because it is called The Pearl.'

'I suppose Jones has been out then?'

'I think he has been washing the boat out,' said Bessie. 'See how wet it is all over. There seems to be nobody at all on the beach.'

'What do you think auntie said to me?' said Arthur, as he leant against the side of the boat. 'She said she was proud of me; that I am a brave, manly fellow; and that she shall write to papa about me, and tell him what I did.'

Bessie and Georgie were by this time in the boat, which was half full of nets, which Jones must have been cleaning so as to be ready for the night fishing. There was, as Bessie had said, nobody on the beach.

There was a short rope fastened to the boat,

and this rope was thrown round a stump of wood, which was driven into the sand.

‘Do you hear what I say, Bessie?’ asked Arthur.

Bessie was nearly tired of the subject ; but she was always ready to join in praising others ; so she said, ‘Auntie said the same to me. Did you see how Cousin Frank worked too, Artie ? I am sure he pulled harder than anybody there.’

‘I’ll be bound he didn’t pull harder than I did,’ answered Arthur.

‘But then he is a man, you see, and of course could do more,’ said innocent Bessie.

‘There you are again, Bess ; just because Frank happens to be a great long-legged fellow, you must needs think so much of him. Frank is not the only man in Tormouth.’

Bessie did not in the least understand why her brother should not like Frank to be praised ; so she said, ‘I am sure no one could have done more than you did, Artie.’

Arthur was so pleased with this saying that he straddled his legs across the boat, so that he had one foot on each edge ; then he tried to rock her from side to side ; but the boat would only rock one way, because of the rope which fastened her to the stump.

'Georgie, jump out and unhitch that rope—there's a good little chap,' said Arthur.

'Oh, Artie, but may we?' asked Georgie.

'I know what I'm about, child; never fear,' said Arthur, feeling himself quite a man.

Georgie did as he was told, and then jumped back into the boat.

Now she rocked splendidly, so that Bessie had to hold on to prevent herself from falling, though it was not the rocking only, but the way in which she laughed that made her nearly fall.

Little by little the boat moved away from the beach, and little by little she slid into the water. Now she rocked much better than before, and the waves splashed against her sides.

'Oh, Arthur!' screamed Bessie, 'leave off; do leave off; we are getting out into the sea.'

'All right,' said Arthur. 'I'll leave off in a minute or two, but this is great fun. Look at Georgie's head, how it waggles about!'

'I can't keep it still,' laughed George. 'It will do so; go on, Artie.'

'No, no; don't, please,' said Bessie. 'Look, Arthur, we are actually in the water. Do let me jump out. We shall get our feet so wet.'

'It is all right,' said Arthur again. 'Don't be

a goose. Do you think I cannot get the boat back again ?'

'Well, leave off rocking, then,' said Bessie.

Arthur did so, and jumped down hard into the boat, right in the middle. Directly he did so the boat left the beach quite behind her, and floated away into the sea.

'Oh, Arthur, what shall we do now ?'

'Well, I can row back again, if it comes to that,' said Arthur, seizing an oar and beginning to pull, as he supposed, towards the shore, with all his might. The boat went round and round, and each round she made she was farther from the beach.

'Here's a nice mess!' said little Bessie, laughing. 'I don't believe you will get home by dinner-time.'

Arthur gave no answer, but by pulling harder than ever, until he was quite red in the face, and the boat was a great deal farther from the shore.

'The fact is, it wants two people to row, of course,' said Arthur, stopping, because he was too tired to go on any more. 'Of course it does, Georgie; see if you cannot pull with the other oar.'

But Georgie could not so much as lift the other oar, let alone pull it, so Arthur had to help him; and having put him and Bessie in their places,

so that they might both pull at once, he returned to his seat.

The first thing Bessie did was to let the oar slip, and, hitting Georgie in the face with it, Georgie tumbled into the bottom of the boat ; he tried to hold on, poor little fellow, but his little hands could not grasp it. Bessie tried to catch the oar as it still rested between the thole-pins—those are the two pieces of wood at the side of the boat which keep the oar in its place,—but she was too late, or the water was too strong for her, for in another moment the oar went over the side and floated away on the sea.

‘ You stupid little booby,’ said Arthur angrily, ‘ why did you let it go ?’

‘ I could not hold it ; indeed I could not,’ said Bessie, beginning to cry.

Just then the church-bells from the little town began to ring for afternoon service. The children had lost all count of time, as well as forgotten the day. Their dinner-hour must have passed over, but then as they had not breakfasted until past twelve, it was not likely that they would care to dine as usual.

‘ What are we to do now, I should like to know?’ said Arthur. ‘ How is a fellow to row with only one oar ?’

‘Perhaps the people on the beach may see us,’ said Bessie ; and she took out her pocket-handkerchief and began to wave it about.

‘There is nobody on the beach,’ said George.

‘Yes, there is,’ Arthur answered. ‘Don’t you see some people ? I can’t make out whether they are men or boys.’

‘Those cannot be on the beach,’ said Bessie. ‘The beach cannot be such a way off. Oh, Artie, where have you brought us ? Oh, Artie, what a way off we must be !’

‘Of course we are a way off. How do you expect we should have been anything but a way off, going as we have been ? Bessie, I wish you would not be such a silly !’

Bessie burst into tears, partly from her brother’s rudeness and partly from being frightened.

‘We are too far off from the beach even for those people to see me waving,’ she said.



CHAPTER XI.

DRIFTING OUT TO SEA.

ARTIE, what are we to do?' asked Georgie, following Bessie's example, and beginning to cry.

'I don't know, I'm sure. Why did you go and let the oar fall?' asked Arthur. 'I don't believe you could have rowed back if I had not,' said Georgie. 'You always pretend you can do everything.'

'And now you have brought us out in this dreadful boat, and we shall be drowned in the sea, and starved to death with hunger and thirst. I am sure I want my dinner already as bad as can be; and it is Sunday too, and it is very wicked of you, I think, to behave in this way,' said Bessie.

For once Arthur was at a loss what to say. Bessie had silenced him with the number of her accusations. He had been feeling very uncomfortable for some time past. All at once he threw

the oar with which he had been rowing into the bottom of the boat and looked at the water.

‘What is the meaning of a current?’ asked Bessie in a little while.

‘A little black thing, of course, which people put into cakes,’ answered Georgie. ‘Oh, dear, dear! there again! We shan’t be home to eat the cake for tea which cook was making yesterday. I do think it is a shame. She said it was for Sunday, and now we are out all this way on the sea.’

‘No, no; not that currant, Georgie,’ said Bessie sadly. ‘I mean a current about here, in the sea.—What is it, Arthur?’

‘A strong stream of water, which pulls everything along with it,’ said Arthur.

‘Then I believe we are in the current now; for look,’ said Bessie, jumping to her feet, ‘look, Arthur, how the boat seems to be dragged away by something underneath. It must be the current.’

‘What do you know about currents?’ asked her brother.

‘Jones the fisherman spoke about it the other day when we were out with him and auntie, and he said it was very dangerous. Oh, what ever will auntie say? How frightened she will be!’

Bessie cried for some time without speaking, and Arthur watched her, but did not call her any rude names for crying. He was getting really

frightened now, for they were hurrying on farther and farther out to sea, and Tormouth looked like no more than a flat coast far in the distance.

At length Bessie raised her head and said, 'Artie, cannot you do anything? I am so frightened!' She spoke in such a sad little voice, that Arthur could not stand it any longer. He leant over the side of the boat to hide his face. Bessie left her seat and came close to him.

'Artie,' said she, 'are you crying?'

Then Arthur was obliged to cry out loud, and he said to his sister, 'Oh, Bessie, it is all my fault. I wish I had done as you asked me; and now I have brought you into this mess, and I do not know what to do.'

'Don't cry, Artie dear,' said Bessie, drying her own tears as soon as she saw how sorry her brother was. 'I am quite sure you would not have done it if you had thought there was any danger.'

'Of course I wouldn't, Bessie,' he said.

'Perhaps we may meet a ship which will take us up,' said Bessie, trying to be cheerful again.

'Or very likely we may come to some desolate island,' said Georgie, 'and live there until a ship takes us off. I should like that very much.'

'I don't think there are any desolate islands about here, Georgie,' said Arthur, without laughing.

'But, Artie, what is that coast that we used to

see opposite from the beach at Tormouth? Didn't auntie say it was France? Why couldn't we land in France?'

'I don't know, dear,' answered Arthur sadly. 'You see this boat may not choose to go over to France. I can't tell where the current that Jones spoke of may lead us. Oh dear, I wish I had done as you said, Bessie. I do indeed!' and Arthur put his face in his hands.

'Arthur,' said Bessie, 'I think the worst thing we can any of us do is to be unhappy about it. We shall be sure to meet with some boat or ship. I know we shall. Perhaps the Tormouth fishermen themselves may come after us.'

'I don't think they will come so far,' said Arthur. 'Besides, this boat won't stop still to be caught up by the others;' and then Arthur looked miserable again, and stared across the sea.

It was getting very hot, for the sun was blazing in the sky, and the children's heads were very uncomfortable. Georgie was the first to complain.

'I can't bear this sun,' he said; 'it makes my head ache so, and oh dear, I am so hungry!' so Bessie coaxed her little brother to lie down at the bottom of the boat, so as to be shaded by her frock; and after a while Georgie fell asleep, and the boat went on, with Bessie saying nothing, and Arthur staring out across the sea.



CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST NIGHT AT SEA.

AFTER he had slept for nearly two hours, Georgie started up and cried out, 'Where are we? Where are we going?' And then he remembered everything; and said again, 'Oh, Arthur, I am so hungry; do give me something to eat.'

'I cannot, Georgie; I have nothing,' said Arthur.
'I only wish I knew where to get anything.'

Georgie began to cry again, for the poor little boy was tired out.

There was in one end of the boat a large heap of netting, for, as I think I told you before, the fisherman had been cleaning his net. Bessie wished to make Georgie forget that he was hungry; she never said how hungry she was herself, poor little girl, and so she called out,—'Georgie, come and

help me to pull this net up. We can lie down so comfortably in the end of the boat, and cover ourselves over.'

'I don't want to cover myself over,' said Georgie, who was getting very cross ; 'I want something to eat.'

But Bessie could not lift away the netting by herself ; so she had to leave it where it was, and Georgie turned round to Arthur, 'I am sure I wish you would sometimes listen to what other people say, Artie. If it had not been for you, we never should have been out at sea in a boat like this. I know we shall die now ; nobody will ever pick us up. We shall go on for years and years until we are three skeletons.'

George had expected that Arthur would give him a cross answer ; and the little boy would have liked that ; for he felt inclined to quarrel with his brother : but to George's surprise Arthur said,— 'I wish I had, Georgie ; I know it's all my fault ; it's all because of my self-conceit.' Then George went across the boat, and kissed his brother, which was much better than quarrelling.

Do you think it strange that Arthur should have altered so quickly ? You see he was very much older than Bessie and Georgie, and he saw at once into what dreadful danger he had brought

them by his folly. There seemed to him now no chance of anything but death from hunger for all of them. This thought had come upon him suddenly when he found they were in the current, and it seemed to be getting stronger and stronger every moment, while Georgie slept and he himself looked over the sea.

After a time the evening came on, and it grew darker and darker, and Georgie began to be afraid of being out in the darkness. He was a silly little boy : for there was nothing in the darkness to fear. The Bible says that the darkness and the light are both alike to God ; and of course God can take care of us all by night quite as well as by day. But little boys and girls do not remember that always.

Perhaps you will hardly believe it, but I have actually known a child, and more than one child, who was afraid of going up-stairs in the dark. Must he not have been a little goose ?

George Layton was just such a goose ; and after a while he lay down and hid his face.

‘ Lie down too, Bessie dear,’ said Arthur in a low voice. ‘ I cannot bear to see you sitting there ; you must be so tired.’

‘ Will you go to sleep too, Artie, if I lie down ? ’ Bessie asked.

‘I will try.’

‘Come over and help me to drag the net over Georgie,’ said Bessie ; ‘there is such a quantity of it that I am sure it would keep him warm.’

She was thinking of little Georgie feeling cold ; and she had only a little cambric frock herself, which came but just below her knees.

Arthur helped Bessie to lift the netting. It was very heavy even for both of them together.

‘He is asleep already, poor little fellow,’ said Bessie. ‘Artie, let us say our prayers together before we go to sleep.’

So they knelt down in the boat, under the open sky and the stars, and said their prayers ; and after they were finished, Arthur sobbed out, ‘Oh God, I have been a very bad boy, but pray do not punish Bessie and Georgie for my wickedness. For Christ’s sake.’

Then they both lay down, and the little girl soon fell sound asleep ; but as soon as he found that she was so, Arthur got up and once more sat upon the bench of the boat, for he felt as if it might be safer to watch, although he scarcely knew for what he was watching.

And so he sat the long long night through, alone with his own sorrowful thoughts, staring up at the bright stars or looking out across the sea.

It was very sad, cold work for the poor boy ; but his heart was so sad that he hardly thought of the cold. He kept saying to himself every now and then, 'Oh, I wish I had not been so obstinate. If I only had stopped before the boat floated away !'

Do you know that it is always the way when any of us have done wrong ; but we ought to think of that before we are obstinate and naughty ; for being sorry will never undo the mischief we have done. If Arthur had been able to see it, only he was too sad to care for anything of the sort, it was a beautiful sight to watch the sun rising as if he came out of the sea ; and then all the sky turned crimson and pink ; and the sea-gulls began to flit about, and dip their wings into the bright blue water.

The sea-gulls came so near the boat, that it seemed as if they wanted to ask what it was doing there all alone, without a man to guide it, and only three children all adrift and lost.

The sun shone brightly upon the face of Bessie, and she started up, looking pale and frightened ; and when in a minute she remembered where they were she looked as if she were going to cry ; but she would not do that for Artie's sake, so she tried to look happy and to smile, and she

said, 'Have you been to sleep, Artie dear? What a lovely morning it is!'

When she spoke Georgie waked up, and he called out, as soon as he opened his eyes, 'Oh dear! oh dear! I am so hungry. No dinner yesterday and no tea, and here is another day and no breakfast! I think it is a shame, I do, that I should be made to starve in this place. Nasty, horrid Artie!'

'Oh, Georgie, Georgie, pray don't,' said Bessie. 'See, Artie is sorry enough already. Look at those pretty sea-gulls.' The little girl hoped she would amuse him and make him talk of something else.

'Ugly things! I hate them!' said Georgie.— 'Ugh, get away! Don't come so near us,' he said, as one of the birds came close to the boat.

'Here, come and sit by me and I will tell you about Tom Thumb,' said Bessie, beginning to pull the netting from off Georgie.

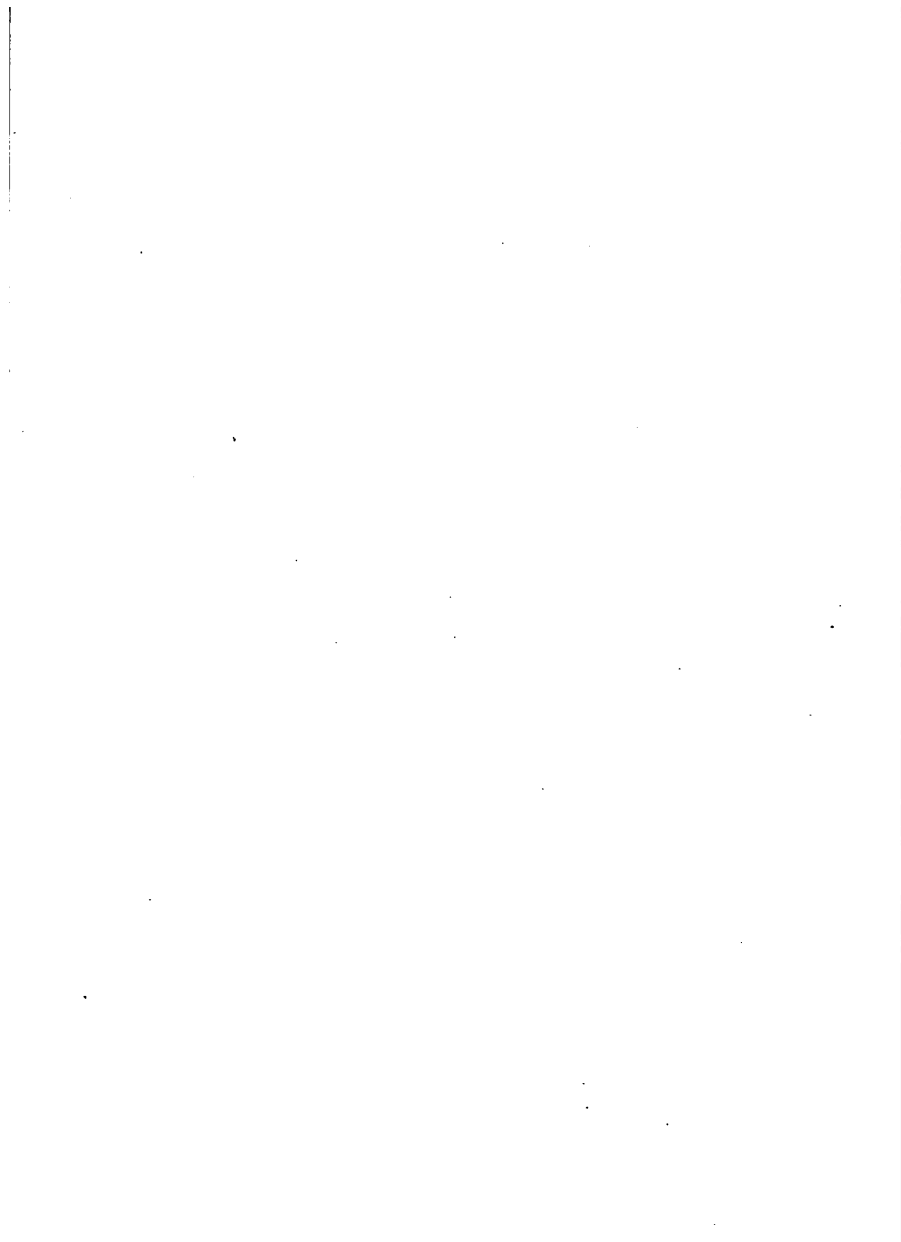
'I don't want to hear about Tom Thumb. I want something to eat.'

'But, Georgie, you look just like a fish caught in a big net,' said his sister. 'Do get out.'

'I don't care if I do look like a fish,' said Georgie, crossly again. 'I wish I was a fish, and then I could eat it for my breakfast.'



ALONE ON THE SEA.—PAGE 94.



'Eat yourself!' asked Bessie, trying to laugh, though she felt more inclined to cry. She was still pulling the netting off her brother, when, all at once, she gave a great shout, and said, 'What's that? Oh, what's that under the nets? I do believe it really is—'

It really was, what? What could Bessie mean? She was a long time getting it out whatever it was, and her hands trembled as she did so.

But after a while she pulled from out of the corner of the boat a large piece of bread, which had fallen out of a wrapper of old waterproof cloth which had been round it.

Georgie actually screamed when he saw the bread, and his eyes looked as if they would goggle out of his head, and poor Arthur burst into tears.

Some of you may think that Arthur had more reason to laugh than to cry.

Then, in a moment after, Bessie pulled out something else. It was some hard cheese, so hard that at home the children would never have thought of eating it. There was a lot of bread and a lot of cheese, enough for dinner for two or three fishermen, but the children felt as if they could eat it all up directly. Georgie wanted to do so, but Arthur said, 'I think that would be foolish, for we shall perhaps want it to-morrow.'

‘Nonsense,’ said Georgie. ‘Why, to-morrow we shall meet with a ship or reach the land, and then we shall have plenty of everything. Oh, what delicious cheese it is! I never tasted any so nice before.’

Bessie was of course just as hungry as Georgie, but she thought that Arthur was right, so she broke the bread and the cheese into halves and stowed them away again in the waterproof cloth, and then the halves into three shares.

Then, when all were eating their breakfast, she said, ‘There is something else there,—a little cask of something to drink, the same as Jones had in the boat the day we went out.’

‘Oh, Bessie, why did not you say so before?’ asked Arthur.

‘I am afraid it may be empty, you know,’ said Bessie. ‘Of course it may be empty, and then we shall all be so disappointed.’

‘Take it out and see,’ said Arthur.

But it was not empty. It was quite full of something; they did not know what.

There was no way of drinking it but out of the cask, as Jones had drunk it on the day that Bessie remembered, and they were much afraid of spilling some of it.

Arthur drank first.

It was beer!

Then Bessie drank; but when it came to Georgie's turn I regret to say that he would not give the cask up again until he had drunk much more than his share.

'Next time,' said Arthur, 'we will each of us drink while some one counts twenty.'

Georgie was a greedy little boy to do this, but then he was very thirsty and hungry.

Bessie put the bung into the little barrel again, and then she said, as if she had only just thought of it,— 'But, Artie, supposing the fishermen should want their dinner, was it stealing, do you think, to take it without asking?'

Arthur did not know; he had not thought about it. 'At any rate, if it is Jones's, I am sure he will give it us if he knew how hungry we are,' he said.

Georgie felt much better after his breakfast, and sat up in the boat and looked about him.

There was plenty to look at, for the farther they went from the land the greater number of sea-birds they saw on all sides of them—birds which perhaps you have never seen. Georgie was so pleased in looking at them, now that he was no longer hungry and tired, that I think for the time he forgot all about the runaway boat, and may

have thought he was out on the water with Aunt Harriette for pleasure.

There were many birds besides gulls, for Tormouth was on a part of the coast where all sorts of wild-fowl come, and many of them build their nests about there amongst the rocks.

Would you like me to tell you some of the birds that the children saw? They saw a bird called a grebe, beautiful brown and grey and white, with red spots about its head. The children did not know it, but it was the same kind of bird as that which is made into tippetts and muffs for ladies; and I daresay they had often before seen the skins of grebes carried about, perhaps by their own mamma.

Then they saw a large flock of birds all flying together. They were black and white, and had enormous great ugly bills like parrots—only worse! These were puffins; and they had been to England only for a time, to build their nests and bring up their little ones; and now that the little ones were able to fly, they were all going abroad to see the world with their parents. Then sometimes Georgie would shout out loud, as he saw birds swimming in the water; and some of these great heavy birds were so tame, that they only stared

at the boat with the children, and did not even move away.

Next they would meet with little quick birds, which flew something like swallows, and would dart into the water to catch something they saw, and never stop an instant, but eat it as they flew. These were terns. Then there were birds who seemed to walk upon the sea, only holding their wings open. These were gulls. There were many different sorts of gulls flying about, and the children did not know they were all the same kind of bird.

And they saw those little birds of which I dare say you have all heard—the stormy petrels. But as this day was bright and calm, instead of stormy, the petrels did not flash and dart about as they would have done had the sea been rough; but they looked as if they were floating upon the top of the water, and resting themselves.

Perhaps you think I have told you enough about the birds that were out at sea.

Boys and girls are dreadfully soon tired of one thing, so I will not say any more about the birds, but will go back to Arthur, and Bessie, and Georgie.



CHAPTER XIII.

GEORGIE GOES OVERBOARD.

SO long as Georgie no longer felt hungry, he was as merry as a little boy could be ; indeed, both he and Bessie were in high spirits after the bread and cheese and beer. They splashed their hands and faces with the water ; they shouted to the gulls as they passed ; they laughed and talked as if they had not a care. But Arthur, although he felt very different from what he had a short time before, could not so easily shake off his anxiety and regret.

As the time passed on, and Georgie's usual dinner-hour came, he became hungry again, and after a little while he turned cross. ' Cannot we eat the rest of the bread and cheese, Artie ? ' he asked. ' Why, what is the use of saving it, as it is there ? I vote we eat it now.'

'We shall be hungry again in the evening, you know, Georgie,' said Arthur. 'I think it will be best to wait a little longer. Look there! there is a bird we have not seen before.'

'I don't want to see any more birds,' said Georgie. 'I hate birds, they keep catching fish and eating them; and they are never hungry.'

'But look! oh look, Artie! what are these? They are not fish; are they? Oh look! there are more; and how they tumble about and splash!' said Bessie, standing up in the boat to look at the creatures.

'What are they? whales do you think?' asked Georgie. 'Oh, I hope they won't come near the boat.'

He forgot for the time all about his hunger in looking at these new things. But they did come nearer and nearer; floundering and tumbling one over the other—looking like great black pigs come out for a bathe more than anything else—and the boat seemed bent upon going nearer to them until Georgie was so frightened that he screamed and shrieked, and ran about the boat in such a way that Arthur and Bessie were quite afraid that they should be capsized. And they had reason to be frightened, for the boat rocked about from side to side, and of course they had no control over her.

It was of no use at all to speak to Georgie and beg him to be still. He was in such a state of terror that I do not think he even heard them speak. Move about he would, and shriek he would, until the boat lurched all on one side, and he went overboard, souse into the sea.

Bessie now screamed in her turn ; for she felt sure her little brother would be drowned ; for he had gone quite under the water ; and she thought that she would see him no more. But in a little while poor Georgie came up again, beating the sea with his poor little hands ; and Artie in a moment jumped after him.

Artie caught his little brother in one arm, and with the other hand he clung on to the side of the boat.

‘ Help him in ; help him in, Bessie, as quick as you can,’ said he.

Bessie knelt at the bottom of the boat, and dragged Georgie in, while Arthur pushed him up with the arm he was not clinging with. Then Artie himself scrambled over the side ; and it was a wonder that the boat did not capsize. I believe it would have done so, if Bessie had not quickly done as her brother told her ; and gone quite far to the other side. You may be sure that they all three were dripping wet, Bessie as well as her brothers ; for Georgie and Arthur brought so

much water into the boat. But they neither of them thought of that at the moment ; for Georgie, with the fright and the going under water a second time, was lying quite still and pale, and looked as if he were dead.

Bessie thought he was, but Arthur could not help thinking he had been so short a time in the sea to be drowned ; and he opened the fisherman's little cask of beer, and tried to pour some down Georgie's throat.

I suppose the beer nearly choked him ; or perhaps Georgie was not so much fainted as he looked ; for he spluttered and spit and turned from white to red in the face, and then all at once he sat up and looked about him. As soon as Georgie seemed all right, Bessie, who always thought of everything first, being a girl, proposed taking off their clothes and drying them.

' But what has become of the creatures—the whales ? horrid things !' said Georgie, looking from side to side.

The whales, as he called them, or, as they were really, the porpoises, had while Georgie was in the water tumbled and floundered out of sight, taking no more notice of the boat and the children than if they had not been there.

' It would have been so horrid to be swallowed like Jonah,' said Georgie, ' wouldn't it ?'

All Artie's and Georgie's clothes had to be taken off, one after the other, and dried in the hot sun ; and most of Bessie's also ; and then the children found that they really were so dreadfully hungry and thirsty that they must eat the rest of the provisions. When this was done, and their clothes were on again, Bessie said to Arthur, ' I don't think Georgie knows that you went into the water after him.'

' Yes, I do,' said Georgie.

' I wonder that you have not thanked Artie, then, for his goodness,' said Bessie. ' You would have been drowned, you know, if he had not caught you.'

' I don't want to be thanked,' said Arthur ; ' if Georgie had been drowned, it would have been all my fault for having brought him and you into this danger.'

' But still, it is not every boy who would have gone overboard after Georgie,' said Bessie. ' I think you are a very brave dear boy, Artie.'

' Don't say so, Bessie,' said Arthur, his eyes filling with tears. ' I was so full of the thought of my own bravery, and of what Auntie had said and Mrs. Stubbs, that I thought myself clever enough for anything ; and see what a mess I have made of it all !'



CHAPTER XIV.

TROUBLES INCREASE.

ANOTHER night came on, and once more Bessie and Georgie crept under the netting and went fast asleep, and Arthur, though he tried to keep awake, found that he could not manage it for a second night, so he was obliged to give in and do as the younger ones did. The action of the boat rocked them off to sleep, and they all slept soundly until the sun was high in the heavens. Then they roused themselves up—to what? They had better have slept on, forgetting that there was nothing for them to eat. It was dreary work looking out over the wide blue sea hour after hour,—the sea, which was so bright and sparkling, with the sun upon it, that it made their eyes ache.

Do you know what it is to be hungry—really

hungry ? I think there are many little boys and girls who have no idea of the meaning of the word.

Perhaps you may have had sometimes to wait for your dinner, or you may have been for a long walk, and may have fancied you were very hungry indeed, but that is not what poor little Georgie felt ; it was not merely a little twinge in his stomach that reminded him that it was dinner-time, it was a downright bad ache, a regular pain.

He kept thinking of all sorts of things to eat, —roast mutton and chickens, and plum-pudding and jam tarts.

It was a very silly way of passing his time certainly, for it made his hunger worse to bear, but I do not think he could help it ; these things to eat would come into his mind, and he seemed to see them floating before his eyes, until at length he called out, 'I cannot bear it ! I cannot bear it any longer !' and he burst into tears.

Oh how glad he would have been then of all the pieces he had thrown about and wasted ! I often think, when I see children so dainty, throwing about their dinner, and not able to eat one thing and another thing, that these children can never have thought what it must be to be very hungry, and of how many little children like themselves have no dinner at all, and would be glad of what they throw away.

Arthur and Bessie had nothing to say to Georgie that could comfort him, so they could only let him cry on until he cried himself to sleep, and lay at the bottom of the boat.

Then those two elder ones sat side by side, holding each other's hands, without speaking. They were too unhappy and weary to talk all through the hours of the day, until the evening came on once more.

Then suddenly a loud clap of thunder startled them and woke up Georgie, who said, in his half sleep, 'Knock him down again, Bessie, or he will be over the edge in a minute.'

He was thinking of the periwinkles in the aquarium at Aunt Harriette's.

Then came great warm drops of rain slowly into the boat, and then a flash of lightning and another clap of thunder; and Georgie screamed and started up.

Now, Georgie was always frightened at thunder and lightning. He was silly for being so, for God can take care of us as easily in a storm as at any other time; and now he was more terrified than ever. The sky became all at once so black that it seemed to be already night; and poor Georgie could do nothing but hide his head in the netting and scream each time the thunder came.

What would the children's papa and mamma

have felt if they could have had any idea of where their dear little girl and boys were then ? In an open boat on such a sea, with the rain coming down upon them and soaking them through, and the thunder roaring and the lightning playing around them !

You may be sure that Aunt Harriette was very much surprised when two o'clock—dinner-time—arrived that day the children left and no one came home to dinner. 'We are not quite ready for dinner,' she said to the cook ; 'the children are not home. Please to keep the dinner hot.'

Then three o'clock struck ; and Aunt Harriette said, 'These children must have forgotten the time ;' and she put on her hat and went out to look for them.

But of course she could see them nowhere. By this time there were a few people upon the beach, and Aunt Harriette asked everybody she met if they had seen the little boys and girl, but everybody said 'No.'

Now, there was quite a small crowd of people standing in about the place where they had stood helping with the wreck the night before, and, seeing this, Aunt Harriette said to herself, 'Oh, no doubt the children are over there talking to the men about the collier.' But when she got close to the crowd, she could not find any of

those she was looking for. Jones was amongst the men, and she said to him, 'I have lost my children. Have any of you seen them about the beach?'

'No, ma'am, sure,' said Jones. 'Lost the little miss and young masters! Have you, ma'am? Well, I don't seem to be the only loser to-day.'

Just then one of the other men whispered to Jones, and Jones made a queer face as if he were going to whistle, and then he said, 'How long have you lost sight of the youngsters, ma'am, maybe?'

'Oh, three or four hours,' said Aunt Harriette.

Then Jones did look so very odd, and some of the men began speaking to each other, so that Aunt Harriette saw it, and asked, 'What is it, Jones? Do you know anything? Have you any idea where they can be?'

Jones did not seem to like to answer, and Aunt Harriette turned to the rest.

'We've a lost his boat, you see, ma'am,' said one of the men, 'and boats can't get unhitched without hands, I reckon.'

'Oh, do you think they have gone in your boat?' said Aunt Harriette, turning very pale, and catching hold of Jones's arm.

'I can't say, ma'am; I hopes not; but it is queerish altogether;' and Jones scratched his head.

Aunt Harriette looked very much as if she was going to fall down, but she did not. Then presently she said, ' Jones, I will give you anything you will ask if you will go in search of them.'

' I'll go without cheating of you,' said Jones ; ' but I must borrow one of my mates' boats.'

As they were speaking, they saw a respectable-looking man walk towards them, and, after a moment, he said, ' What is it ?'

He was told by one of the men ; and then he asked, ' The little chap who helped to haul me out of the water ?'

So this was the captain of the collier.

' Yes ; and a smaller 'un,' said Jones ; ' and the little missy.'

' What ! her too ?' said the Captain. ' I mind her this morning running forward with the rug—bless her pretty little face !—and saying her pretty little words. One good turn deserves another. I'm your man, mates. Let's have out a boat without delay.'

' Oh thank you, thank you,' said Aunt Harriette, crying.

' Don't 'ee fret, ma'am,' said Jones kindly. ' You keep a good heart till we brings the youngsters back again.'

Jones said so to comfort poor Aunt Harriette, for he was a kind man, and could not bear to see

any one unhappy ; but no sooner was Aunt Harriette out of hearing, than he added, ' Small chance we have of ever finding them, I'm afraid, or the boat either, except its bottom upwards.'

When Aunt Harriette went home, the first person she saw was Frank ; and as soon as ever he heard what his mother had to say, he ran to join the men who were going out in the boat after his cousins.

You may be sure that Mrs. Stubbs had a great deal to say on the subject, but what she said was not of a sort to make poor Aunt Harriette feel more happy and comfortable.

' Ah, poor lambs !' said Mrs. Stubbs, ' it will be a wonder if you ever sees them again, my dear lady. Why, they're drifted off half way over to France before this ; if indeed the boat haven't capsized and drowned 'em, pretty dears ! Don't take on, ma'am ; do try to eat a bit of something. Fretting won't bring 'em back, you see ; but I always have said, and always will say, that of all coasts for an open boat this is about the worst.'

So you see Aunt Harriette was not likely to get much comfort from Mrs. Stubbs. She was not near so wise as Jones the fisherman.



CHAPTER XV.

THE RESCUE.

WE left Arthur and Bessie and Georgie being soaked through with the rain and in the midst of all the thunder and lightning. But storms, however bad, do not last for long; and after the boat had been well tossed about by the waves, and the children quite drenched, the sky began to clear up. But there was no sun now by which to dry their clothes, and they had to sit shivering in their wet things until the moon came out clear and bright; and the third night had set in. Georgie was the best off, for he had been so hidden under the netting and the seat of the boat that he was not nearly so wet as the others.

‘Bessie, do lie down and go to sleep,’ said Arthur.

But Bessie felt as if she could not sleep ; she had said nothing about it ; but she was cold and shivered, and faint.

Arthur still kept asking her to go to sleep, till Bessie broke down ; and when once she had begun to cry she could not stop herself.

'Oh, I can't help it, Artie,' she sobbed ; 'I have tried not to cry ; but it would come.'

Arthur did not know what to say. He could only sit with his arm round her, to try and keep her warm. Once he pulled off his jacket and would have put it on his sister ; but she would not let him. When Bessie had ceased crying, she said to her brother, 'Artie, do you know that when everybody thought the poor captain of that coal-ship would be drowned, Auntie told me to ask God to save his and all the men's lives ; and I did so ; and God saved them all. Cannot God save us now if we ask Him ?'

'Of course He can, I suppose, Bessie,' said Arthur, 'but perhaps He won't. He might save you and Georgie ; but I have brought it all on myself and you by my folly.'

Bessie did not know quite what to say to Arthur in answer ; but she used the best words she could think of :—

'I daresay He will, Artie, if you are sorry.'

‘ I am sure I am sorry,’ said Arthur.

‘ Then I think we had better ask God to save us ; don’t you ? ’

Arthur said, ‘ Yes ; you do it, Bessie.’

‘ You too,’ said Bessie.

So Bessie said this little prayer : ‘ Pray God take care of us, and help us and bring us home again safe. For Jesus Christ’s sake.’

I think that was a very nice little prayer, for it said exactly what Bessie wished to say ; and was better than any prayer which had been learnt by rote.

Then all at once Bessie felt as if she could go to sleep ; indeed, she felt as if she could not keep awake any longer ; and she forgot all about the cold and the hunger ; and dreamt of home and papa and mamma and Aunt Harriette and Frank, and even about the aquarium and the periwinkles ; and after a little while Arthur fell asleep also, and they all slept on and on until they were waked up by a very great bump, as if the boat was going to be broken to pieces.

‘ Hallo, sir ! get out of the way ! ’

Arthur and George could not make out the meaning of it all ; for in their long sleep they had forgotten where they were, and all about having left home in an open boat, upon the sea.

They felt stiff and cramped from lying so long in their wet clothes, and it was some minutes before they could rouse themselves up at all, so as to understand what was the matter.

'Hallo, sir !' were the first words the children heard, when they woke up. It was very nice to hear some one speak after not having heard any voices but their own and the sea-gulls' for so long ; but they could see no one from whom the voice had come ; for it was the dark hour before the dawn.

Gradually Arthur's eyes became used to the darkness, and then he saw that the boat was close alongside some vessel.

'Bessie, Georgie,' cried he ; 'we have come to a ship ; it is all right : oh, it is all right !'

Georgie stood up trembling with eagerness ; but Bessie said nothing. She had raised her head when first the boat had come against the ship's side ; but it had sunk down again. It was not much of a ship after all ; only some little herring smack.

A grimy-faced boy now bent over the side, and said, 'Hallo ! keep out of the way, can't you ?'

'Do take us on board, please,' said Arthur ; 'we have been out at sea a long time in this boat, and we are half dead with hunger.'

'Here's a go!' said the boy, and away went his head, so that Arthur saw him no more. He thought he was gone altogether and did not mean to come back, and he cried out, 'Oh, do take us in! do take us!' while Georgie tried to climb up the side of the herring boat and fell back again.

In a few minutes the boy came back again with an old man, and they both looked over the side. The old man looked very cross, and said nothing to the children, and then the boy halloed out, 'Shall I fetch a rope?'

The old man was very deaf indeed.

'Ay,' said he, 'we may as lief.'

He meant, 'we may as well.'

The boy fetched a rope; and Arthur helped little Georgie to clamber up the side of the herring smack; then he turned to Bessie, but she did not seem to care about leaving the boat.

'Bessie dear,' said Arthur, 'Bessie dear, get up.'

She half got up, and fell down again.

'Oh, she is ill; she is dying. I am sure she is,' said Arthur. 'Here, boy! Will you stretch out your hands to help her up?' The boy did so, while Arthur lifted her in his arms, and even climbed up part of the rope with Bessie. He did not think he was so strong, but people are always stronger when they are frightened.

As soon as Arthur left the boat the grimy-faced boy jumped off into her.

'Here's a first-rate seine, grandfather,' he shouted.

'Ay, ay! all right, lad!' said the old man. Then the boy fastened 'The Pearl' to the herring boat, and then scrambled again on deck. Meanwhile Arthur was bending over Bessie. Her face was flushed and red, and her hands burning hot; but it was of no use speaking to the old man; he could not make him hear. When the boy returned Arthur said to him, 'My little sister is ill. She is hungry and cold. Do get me something for her.' So the boy, whose name was Jack, shouted to the old man, who of course said, 'Ay, lad, ay!' and went below. Presently he came back with a very large piece of bread and cheese. Georgie started forward as soon as he saw this, and cried with eagerness for them; but Arthur offered them first to Bessie. She shook her head, and said in a low voice, 'Water.'

Jack was a good-natured boy, and he ran below and brought up a little tin pot full of water, which did not look very clean; but Bessie drank it all and then closed her eyes again. Poor little Bessie had got fever from the wet and the fear and the hunger. Arthur made sure she would die.

How unhappy he felt ! He almost forgot that he was hungry. He took off his jacket and covered Bessie with it. She was too ill now to notice it ; and kind Jack, seeing him do so, went and fetched an old jacket of his, which smelt very strong of fish, and put that over Bessie also.

‘ How did you come here, I say ? ’ asked Jack, after he had looked at the little girl for some minutes. ‘ What ever made you go to sea in a boat with one oar and without nothing to eat ? ’

Arthur told him all about it, and asked which way he and his grandfather were going, and whether they would take them back to Tormouth.

‘ It ain’t noways in our beat,’ said Jack. ‘ We don’t go no farther than we need to. We shall be met by them as takes our fish before long, and we haven’t no call to go farther.’

Arthur could not half understand what the boy meant, but he understood some of it, and he said, ‘ Have you any fish here now ? ’

‘ Look ’ee,’ said Jack, pointing to a pile of large hampers. ‘ All fish ; nothing else ; ready packed.’

Arthur and Georgie had hardly time to get over their wonder at the new place they were in when a fresh change came to them. Before that very day was over, a little ship, called a cutter, came in sight.

If it had not been for Bessie's illness Arthur would have enjoyed all that he now saw, for it was so new ; but he could not enjoy anything as he sat by his little sister's side, holding her hot hand and listening to her talk, for Bessie talked of all sorts of things.

Sometimes she spoke about the wreck, and she called out loud that the captain would be drowned, and then she was in the boat, and shivered as she spoke of the rain coming down and wetting her through, and next she would laugh and say that the periwinkles had crawled to the top of the tank again. In the midst of all this the cutter came up to the herring boat, and there was a great deal of hurry and bustle, lifting the large hampers over the side and packing them on the cutter's deck, and then there was a long talk between the captain and the old man, in which Arthur found out that there were other men belonging to the herring boat, only they had stopped behind somewhere, to be picked up again ; and next Arthur found that the old man was speaking about him and his brother and sister. He went forward and said to the captain, ' Sir, will you have the goodness to take us back to Tormouth ?'

' I could not do that, my lad,' the captain

answered, 'but I will take you on and land you as near as I can.'

This seemed better to Arthur than being in an open boat with nothing to eat, so he did not stop to think what would become of them when landed, but thanked the captain.

Poor little Bessie had to be carried on board the cutter. The captain did that as soon as he found she was ill; and then Arthur thought of Jack, and wished that he had something to give him. He felt in the pockets of his jacket and took out a clasp-knife, a pencil-case, and a pair of worsted gloves.

'Here, Jack,' said he. 'I wish I had something to give you, but this is all I have.' Jack's eyes sparkled as he took the things; and then, in his waistcoat pocket, Arthur found a shilling. Jack's eyes sparkled still more, and he seemed to think that he had been given a great deal. Then Arthur and he shook hands, and shortly afterwards they were all on board the cutter.



CHAPTER XVI.

GOING HOME.

EVERYBODY was kind to little Bessie, and she began to get better; and Georgie, having got over his fright and his fatigue, was as saucy and as mischievous as a monkey, so that he was a great amusement to the men; but Arthur, being older, could not so soon forget all the unhappiness they had gone through, nor how much he had been to blame.

They did not know whereabouts on the sea they were, but the men of the cutter had told Arthur that they were bound for Gravesend, where they would unship their load of fish. Arthur knew that Gravesend was near London, and he felt frightened when he thought how far that would be from Tormouth, or from Bath, where his papa lived. He went to the captain

and said, 'Will you take me as a ship-boy, sir? I am big enough to work.'

'For why, my lad?' asked the captain. 'I thought you were a gentleman.'

'If we land at Gravesend I could never find my way home,' said Arthur, 'let alone poor Bessie and Georgie. If you will let us stay with you until you should happen to go to Tormouth, I would work while I am here.'

'Well, that's honest at any rate,' said the captain, smiling; 'but we are not at Gravesend yet, my boy, so don't fret yourself.'

While Arthur was speaking to the captain there was a shout, and they saw a boat, which looked somehow like a friend, close up; and a man on board the boat was shouting something about three children and Tormouth; and Arthur ran to the side, and the first face he saw was that of Jones.

He would have sprung over the side into the Tormouth boat if he had not been caught by the captain, and when he did contrive to get down he fell to hugging Jones round the neck with all his might. Then the man who was standing up, and who had been the one to shout, asked where the others were, and Arthur left go Jones and became grave again, and said that Bessie was very ill.

'The poor little maid! Ill, is she? I'll go and bring her down,' said the man; and he was about to climb on deck, when the captain came forward with Bessie in his arms. .

She stretched out her arms at once to the man in the boat, and said gently, 'Why, it is the captain of the collier who was nearly drowned;' for she knew him at once.

'So it is, my pretty,' said he; 'and he don't forget how you brought the rug to cover him. Here it is, you see; I'll wrap you in it, little lassie.'

Yes, there was the rug she knew so well, and Bessie shut her eyes and felt quite happy; but she managed to wave her little hand to the man on board the cutter, as the boat rowed away fast towards home.

'It's next to a miracle coming across 'em like this—a miracle, and nothing else!' said Jones.

Only Arthur knew what he meant.

It was very late in the day now, and the men covered up the children now for the night; but they themselves never left off rowing, changing about as they were tired.

They had plenty of things to eat and drink, so that their voyage was very pleasant, but they were very impatient to be home. They had had enough of being on the water for a long time.

How long it seemed since they had left the

beach of Tormouth, and how lovely everything looked as they at length came near it! Arthur felt as if he must jump out before the boat came to shore.

But at last they were close to shore, and those on the beach saw them—the boat full of men and children, dragging Jones's boat after her—and people began to run towards the landing-place; and the fishermen set up a great 'Hurrah!' And there was Aunt Harriette with Mrs. Stubbs holding out her hands, and hardly knowing what she did, until in another minute the children were in her arms.

To this day, sometimes by night Arthur will dream that he is out in that open boat at sea, with the stormy petrels flying about, and the thunder, and the lightning, and the rain! And he will start to find himself in his warm, comfortable bed at home, and wonder that he could have been such a foolish boy as he was.

You may be quite sure of one thing, that after this Arthur had not such a high opinion of himself, and, as he tried to cure his self-conceit, others had a much higher opinion of him.

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